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for the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF JAMAICA

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The primary tasks of the National Librarian would be the achievement of those goals set for the National Library by the inherent logic of the institution and by the policies approved by the Board of Management appointed by the Council of the Institute to administer the Library. The National Librarian is an ex-officio member of the Board of Management and a member of the Council of the Institute of Jamaica.

Applicants should have (1) either a good first or higher degree in some field of academic specialization (preferably in the Arts or the Social Sciences) plus a recognized professional qualification in librarianship, or Fellowship of the Library Association, or equivalent qualifications; (2) appropriate professional library experience in a senior administrative capacity; (3) demonstrated ability to work effectively with high-level governmental and other officials, library and other professional groups, as well as a varied library clientele including both scholars and the general public; (4) knowledge of current developments in librarianship by continuing education, attendance at conferences, workshops and the like.

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Applications (three copies) including a detailed curriculum vitae, stating nationality, and names and addresses of three referees, should be sent as early as possible to the Chairman, Board of Management, National Library of Jamaica, 12 to 16 East Street, Kingston, Jamaica, W.I.

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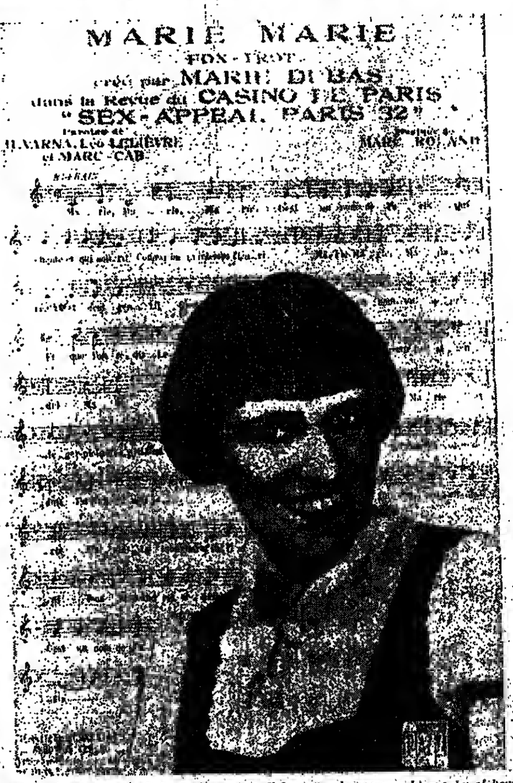


Marie Dubas, a star of the Paris music hall between the wars—a biography of her is reviewed on page 781 of this issue.

The elucidation of Henry Adams

New critics for old, by Denis Donoghue

The education of Gavin Ewart

Paris from Haussmann to high-rise; Robert of Les Halles

The collapse of linguistics

Fiction: Angus Wilson, Margaret Drabble, 'Sylvie and Bruno'

Commentary: 'Hamlet', 'Tom Fool', 'The Last Days of Mankind'

Eleanor Roosevelt and friend

THE TIMES

THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

11 JULY, 1980

contents

Fifty years on . . .

In the TLS of July 10, 1930, E. Montgomerie reviewed Charles J. V. Murphy's Parachute :

This story of the parachute is further evidence of the identity of the Preserver with the Destroyer. The parachute issued from amongst the ideas as a contrivance whereby dare-devils made quick money by risking their lives; and it is now, in Mr Murphy's phrase, a vehicle of escape—by the time he has finished with it the breathless reader will think of life-belts and fire-escapes as asking it to come in and sit down; for what they do with water and fire, it does with air.

The sinister glitter of the water below the platform of the high-diver; the remoteness of the tug-out below the ski-jump—many of us know the thrill in those, but what is it to shut off jumping into the void which stretches indefinitely below the man who throws himself into space? The appeal to the needs no stressing, and it is easily intelligible that men with the courage to use the parachute found people to pay to see them do it. Mr Charles Murphy describes the early history of the device. It was discovered by accident: 150 years ago, when a balloon that had burst in mid-air was forced by the wind into the shape of a parachute, with the result that the aeronaut, a Frenchman, was lowered safely to the ground. "Apparently unaffected by his narrow escape, the 'Professor' set out to capitalize it." For many years parachuting was what we now call a "stunt"—not only intrinsically dangerous, but with the element of danger artificially emphasized to make the descent more spectacular. Acrobats came down holding on by their legs to a trapeze. Mork Berg went further; he nailed in strip of leather to the bar and dangled from it by his teeth. A day came when he bit through the leather and fell four thousand feet to his death.

By his time, then, man had exploited to the utmost the element of danger in the parachute, and had demonstrated that he possessed the courage to use it. But by far the greater part of Mr Murphy's book is given to the development of the parachute as a means of preserving life. The impetus towards this development came in the war. Many airmen were killed through "crashing" not only at the front but in the first few hours of training that it became obviously expedient to invest money, time, brains and, even, life in discovering some means whereby the pilot could abandon disabled aircraft in safety. . . . Most significant of the development of the parachute as a means of saving life is the understanding among airmen that the pilot jumps last; he does not lead a forlorn hope by jumping first; he stays by his ship until all on board have sought safety. In the photographs parachutes are shown in action.

The sweet taste of defeat

By Robert M. Adams

R. P. BLACKMUR :
Henry Adams
378pp. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. $19.95.
0 15 139997 2

WILLIAM DUSINBERRE :
Henry Adams
The Myth of Failure
250pp. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia. $20.
0 8139 0833 7

The basic circumstances of Henry Adams's life can be rehearsed in a few words. He was born at Boston in 1838, fourth child and third son of Charles Francis and Louisa Brooks Adams; his grandfather was John Quincy Adams, sixth president. After graduating from Harvard College in 1858, and spending some years in foreign travel, he served as private secretary to his father, minister to Great Britain during the crucial period of the American Civil War (1861-1868). For several years thereafter, he was a free-lance journalist working out of Washington; and from 1870 to 1877 he taught history at Harvard. In 1872 he married Marian (Clover) Hooper of Boston, with whose encouragement and help he embarked on a literary career. The results were one anonymous and one pseudonymous novel, *Democracy* (1880) and *Esther* (1884); two biographies, of Albert Gallatin (1879) and John Randolph (1882); and a nine-volume *History of the United States under Jefferson and Madison* (published 1889-91). In 1885 his wife committed suicide as a result of a profound and deepening depression. In 1904 *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* was privately printed, and in 1907 *The Education of Henry Adams*. After 1877 Henry Adams lived chiefly in Washington; after the death of his wife, he undertook no new literary projects till the last two volumes, printed in a few copies when he was sixty-six and sixty-nine, published when he was seventy-four and posthumously. Henry Adams died in 1918.

The peculiar shape of this career is pointed up by a well-known oddity of the autobiographical *Education*. It passes in silence over twenty years of the author's life from 1872 to 1892—that is, it omits the entire period of his marriage and of his major literary activity before the last two books. The two all-important events of this period were his wife's suicide (for a deep and dangerous complex of reasons, no doubt, but for which Henry Adams never ceased to feel personally responsible), and the relatively modest popular success of his big American history. We note that after 1877 he had no formal employment; and that, though he was appointed assistant professor of medieval history at Harvard, much the greater part of his work dealt with modern American, and essentially diplomatic, history. Though he lived most of his life in Washington DC, and was well acquainted in the administration and the diplomatic corps, he never held an official government position. In 1892, he was offered an LLD degree from Harvard; he refused it with gross and deliberate rudeness. There were no jobs, or offers of jobs; evidently, though the *Education* makes much of his neglect, he did not want one. He was never an ingratiating man, and over the lost thirty years of his life he became a semi-recluse, travelling widely and restlessly but cultivating at home only old acquaintances and family members. Though he chose to live in Washington, he was fond of thinking and saying that a friend in office was a friend lost.

Throughout his life, he was fortunate enough to enjoy a more than adequate private income. He was not physically impressive or energetic, unlike his older brother Charles, with whom his relations, though close, were never easy. Like other Boston Adamses, he had a sharp tongue, a contrary disposition, and a trenchant sense of his own dignity. One of the few stereotypes to which he seems to conform is that of the prickly little man. He had or proclaimed a special fondness for women—his nieces or the wives of his friends particularly—to whom he professed to see a hope for the future of society. But the future he foresaw for them included no careers, no political activity; it was, rather, a future of shedding beneficent influence. He alternated between a belief that the "laws" of history were knowable with a high degree of certainty, and a belief that it was futile to think about them. Especially in the *Education*, he made a great deal of his own "failures" and "ignorance"—an indictment which he rarely failed to soften with the reflection that everybody else had failed like him and was equally ignorant, except in the point of not recognizing their ignominy.

Where one locates the centre of this curiously truncated yet wide-branching career is a question that is just now reaching toward its second answer. The first answer accepted a relatively low estimate of the *History* as a piece of honest, uninteresting carpentry, and founded the case for Henry Adams's importance on the last two books.

This is the valuation assumed by R. P. Blackmur in his posthumous and incomplete study, *Henry Adams*, now assembled from the typescripts by Veronica Makowsky with the addition of some material from previously published articles. The history is barely referred to in this study, which is in essence a close reading, almost a paraphrase, of the *Education* and *Mont-Saint-Michel*, supplemented by a charming fifty-five-page biographical sketch, describing the lost years. A contrasting, if not contrary, point of view is proposed by William Dusinberre in *Henry Adams: the Myth of Failure*. Mr Dusinberre argues at some length for the value of the history, not simply "in its day", which is an easy condescension, but as a work of abiding value; his argument takes detailed account of recent historical work in the same field, and sets Adams in the company of Macaulay and Gibbon, with whom he supposed himself to be "competing". By the same token, Dusinberre looks rather dourly at *Mont-Saint-Michel*, which he describes as stylistically mannered and charges with reducing its complex materials to sterile stereotypes and simple antitheses. While he grants great authority and charm to the first part of the *Education*, Dusinberre has very little that is good to say about the later materials, such as the dynamic theory of history and the quasi-scientific speculations about the nature of the cosmos and man's position in it—overspeculations which he thinks of little value in themselves and vitiated by the author's querulous, self-important tone. Platonists will, perhaps, be more ready to go along with Blackmur; soldier Aristotelians will opt for Dusinberre.

Apart from such ultimate judgments, Dusinberre observes with some regularity the conventions of expository English prose. The closeness of Blackmur's perspective can be unnerving; he seems to have written with the basic texts in front of him for instant reference, and to expect that the reader will maintain the same posture. As Adams himself is a notably allusive, elusive, indirect author, skilled at using abstractions, generalizations, and private metaphors to obscure what he is talking about—and as Blackmur is even better at this game—a reader now well feel (for the first 277 pages of this volume, till the biographical sketch begins) that the explanation is more work for less reward than the basic texts.

Very likely Blackmur, had he been spared to do so, would have rubbed down some of the knots and splinters that impede progress through his text; they are not trifles. He translates Adams "to this South Seas", without giving any of the practical reportorial details of where, when, and with whom; as to what significance the trip had, it is lost in a game of fishy metaphor. Blackmur brings total strangers into the paraphrase as abruptly as Adams into his narrative; and neglects as completely to introduce them. He is fond of piling interrogatives one on top of the other without pausing to attempt an answer to any of them; and there are passages of which this reader, after serious struggles, was unable to get the point. A paragraph begins (page 54):

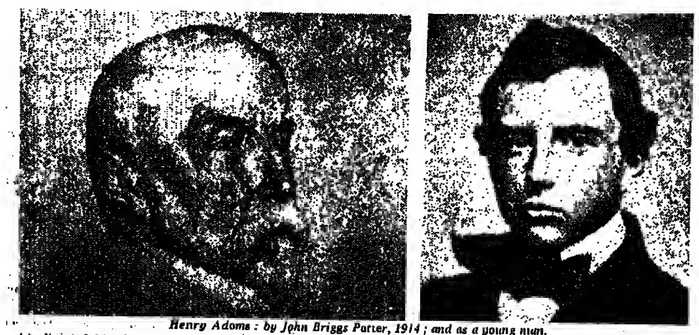
> The problem is central and unsolvable, whether the struggle for choice is not the struggle to be chosen, and takes different emphases from differently conditioned stresses. Perhaps one ends by finding a long-term policy which gradually absorbs the immediate impolicy as the inertia of instinct absorbs the accidents of will, and as the pressure of interest consolidates, while it aggravates, choice.

Or again, in discussing that portentous equation between the Virgin and the dynamo, Blackmur notes a special difficulty in the circumstance that the dynamo, being inhuman, could offer little comfort to a human adopter; accordingly, Adams fell back on those modes of the mind which had created, or discovered, the symbolic force of the Virgin—or I do, those aesthetic modes which may include even the most abstract algebra among their means to the concrete and their avenues to the occult, just as they insist that the most concrete or dramatic images, once they are put in motion, force themselves into the abstract. These are the modes that seize an identity and feel an energy: it is not the means that count, when they are the means of science, but the dominance of the mode whereby the value rather than the development and economy of energy is seen.

I see a modestly sized idea in the remote middle distance behind this language; but the Henry Adams who cut his teeth on Bishop Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric* could have used fewer words to say it more clearly. It's hard to think he would not have been irked at the way Blackmur jungles through a paragraph of word-play on the death of Clareuce King and the advent in Adams's life of "the Virgin Mary, a correspondent Queen.

Especially in the *Education*, Adams has a way of cressing for himself semi-private symbols which he uses henceforth with considerable freedom, allowing the new purposes to pitch new meanings from old images. Thus, *Terebrantula* is established usefully as a creature which has done no evolving at all, which is identical from one end of geologic time to the other. But the significance of *Pterospis*, a ganoid fish not unlike our contemporary sturgeon, though he lived several million years ago, is less clearly defined; and Blackmur, while recognizing his symbolic richness, protests with unwonted vigour against this lack of clarity. "Adams' symbols of this order are intended to carry both parts of his meaning, thought, or judgment in a single vehicle, so that they make one stroke upon the sensibility; but there is a little plain nonsense in them, too, a little of *hoc est corpus* turned into hocus-pocus." Yet, consoling himself with the thought that "there is nonsense at the center of the major as well as the minor contradictions in man's mind"—a fairly large cleaver for writing bother, as it seems to me—he proceeds to use the emblem of *Pterospis* over and over, making it stand for an extremely hazy and undefined concatenation of notions, which the reader must invent for himself.

The Manichaeism which distorts *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* as history and philosophy is no doubt its most appealing feature as disguised autobiography. Adams's appreciation of architectural details,



Henry Adams : by John Briggs Potter, 1914 ; and as a young man.

Beyond the exemplary

By William Boyd

MARGARET DRABBLE :
The Middle Ground
248pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £5.95.
0 297 77808 0

"Everything has too much history", ponders a character in Margaret Drabble's latest novel. "No wonder a pattern is slow to emerge from such thick clutter of cross references, from such trivia, from such serious but hidden connections. . . . And as for commenting words in paper it is not surprising that this exercise should present problems." Such problems—thematic, philosophical and stylistic—have been preoccupying Margaret Drabble over the course of her last three novels. Certainly since *The Needle's Eye*—an overlong and faintly tired attempt to wrench her traditional ironic social comedy mode into something more significant—she has tackled her fictional projects with more verve and authority. *The Middle Ground* is no exception, and in one sense it joins *The Realms of Gold* and *The Ice Age* as another late twentieth-century version of *Middlemarch*. All are "State of England" novels; all share, in varying degrees, a concern to understand the individual's dilemma in the path of history and—even more Forsterian—offer tentative solutions and comfort to the beleaguered liberal-humanist outlook in a world of random violence and apparent anarchy.

The Realms of Gold and *The Ice Age* by now large dramatizes this vain but noble struggle in the novels' respective central characters. *The Middle Ground* adopts a more fluid approach, switching easily between the *haut-bourgeois* Londoners that Drabble knows and documents so well. There is Hugo, a one-armed journalist, responsible for the musings quoted above; Ted Steinmetz, a successful libertine doctor, and his patient and placid wife Evelyn; and there is Kate Armstrong, her story dominating the novel, a popular columnist with a nice line in feminist/domestic articles. The time is 1979—October to be precise—and in the course of the book only nine weeks a month or so, during which very little of real consequence takes place. Most of the novel is made up of recollection as Drabble analyses the way "the modern consciousness is so burdened with its past", as Hugo puts it. It takes the form of protracted flashbacks, filling us in on the essential details of the characters' lives and the way they interact in their close friendships.

The novel's present deals with Kate's attempt to set up and film a television documentary called "Women at the Crossroads", an undertaking that prompts her to consider the crossroads she has reached in her own life as she enters the other characters enter middle age. The past trails leadenly behind, the present is full of uncertainty, the future ahead is ominous and depressing in the course of her research for the film and, so to speak, into herself, she revisits her drab childhood home, her old school, meets her friends, talks politics with her Iraqi lodger and thinks and reflects, hoping in the end to move beyond the "middle ground".

These thematic objectives are capably and seriously approached, but dissatisfactions with *The Middle Ground* arise over its unnecessary complications of structure. The haphazard temporal shifts Drabble employs in the narrative (a gesture against chronology, History's ally) bring their own stylistic problems. For example this, on the period just after Kate has had an abortion:

> The whole thing had, however, it now seemed, depended on a natural flow of good spirits, a natural cheerfulness. Now they had abandoned her, these kindly spirits, and left her in an empty plain. . . . To those months, she told Hugo, I couldn't do anything right. Everything I did went wrong as though some spell were on me. . . . Would I have been full of the spirit of life and love and joy and hope if I'd had a wretched baby with no bowel control and a spine split like a kipper and a head like a pumpkin? . . . I probably would. Life is rotten, darling, rotten. And she would begin to cry at this point and Hugo would give her a Kleenex.

And that is Kate's history, up to date. We will end it with an account of her visit to the Harrogate conference last month. She's gone up to cover a conference on old age. . . .

And so on, into another solid chunk of reminiscence, out of context this may seem fairly unexceptionable but there are pages and pages of this slithering between tenses, endless passages of indirect speech and this peculiar kind of pseudo conversation that Drabble is compelled to rely on in order to break the tedium of repeated use of the past perfect.

The Realms of Gold employed a similar cinematic cutting-technique but, as its moves were spatial rather than temporal, the grammar did not draw attention to the device in the same way as it does in *The Middle Ground*. Here the syntactical demands of the language seem to get in the way, giving the narrative a somewhat breathless anecdotal tone and producing a strong inclination in the reader to skip the tedious flashbacks and return to the more direct dramatic flow of the present.

However, the technique will suit many readers' off as most of the lengthy reminiscences are dealt with and as the novel progresses. The collisions between past and present, reflection and action, are achieved more smoothly as the gap narrows between them. Indeed, it seems to me that *The Middle Ground* gets very much better as it goes on. Towards the end of the book, Kate's friend Evelyn is involved in a bitter domestic squabble between some down-and-out friends of hers. It turns nasty and Evelyn is blinded, temporarily, by some ommonia. This accident, another arbitrary defeat at the hands of History, is something of a climacteric, and the event, and Evelyn's recovery and convalescence, take on epiphanic overtones. It brings them, especially Kate, to a sharper awareness of their own mortality or, to put it another way, illuminates their powerlessness to shape or give significance to their lives.

Kate, comforting Evelyn's teenage children shortly after the accident, wonders how she had managed to acquire the deadly notion that overcoming she did or thought had to be *exemplary*, had to mean something. . . ".

A wonderful if temporary relief flowed through Kate, at this release from the guilt of the representative. Henceforth she would represent nothing but herself. And if she liked to sit here with three teenagers not even her own, and happy, yes, she could not deny it, happy, to have been called in to be of use, to be able to do something for Evelyn and for them . . . well that meant nothing at all but that *she liked* it.

"Only Connect", one might add. The novel ends on this positive note: a recalcitrant faith in the holiness of the heart's affections is full knowledge that the future—unplanned, unpredictable and inescapable—beckons ahead. What is also particularly impressive in the final half of the novel is the way Margaret Drabble inserts and prunes key symbols and images. Her touch here is especially fine and discreet—a deliberate misquotation from Wordsworth, a Russian folk tale in an old school book, or a painting of "Psyche locked out of the Palace of Cupid"—they all function in exactly the way allusion should: unobtrusive yet complementary, and with no hint of pretension.

At one stage in the novel, Hugo the journalist sits down at his typewriter and tops out some trial sentences. Appalled at the mawkish sentiment of the things he has written he observes

> Now that . . . is really bad writing, despite the fact that I mean every word for it. . . . The more I try to tell the truth, the worse I write. But surely, at my age, I ought to have the courage to write badly? What do I fear to lose?

The Middle Ground is a bold and serious attempt to tell the truth as Margaret Drabble sees it. The book's aspirations are large but its conclusions essentially humble and consoling.

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E. P. Blackmur's *Henry Adams* will be published in Britain by Secker and Warburg next month at £9.95.

Chariot wheels of fortune

By Bernard Bergonzi

ANGUS WILSON :
Setting the World on Fire
269pp. Secker and Warburg. £6.50.
0 436 57604 X

PETER FAULKNER :
Angus Wilson : Mimic and Moralist
225pp. Secker and Warburg. £6.95.
0 436 15175 8

It has been a long time since Angus Wilson wrote primarily as the traditional realist and sharp, deflating social observer he is conventionally reputed to be. As long ago as 1961, with *The Old Men in the Zoo*, he turned towards fantasy and fable, and his last two novels, *No Laughing Matter* and *As If By Magic*, showed a sophisticated self-awareness about the possibilities and limitations of fictional form. In *Setting the World on Fire* he is far from everyday realism, whether of presentation or of subject matter, and heavily into myth; in particular, the myth of Phaethon; and in general, the lives of the very rich, who are seen not just as different from the rest of us, in Scott Fitzgerald's phrase, but as quasi-mythical beings.

Wilson sets his story in a framework of exact but partly invented history. He begins with a large, handsome house with extensive gardens and a park, lying between Westminster Abbey and Smith Square, which has been in the hands of the same prodigiously wealthy family ever since it was built in the late seventeenth century. Here nearly all the action takes place. In a brief foreword Wilson sets down the essential "facts" about Tothill House, and very plausible they sound. It was commissioned in the 1680s by Sir Thomas Tothill to replace a house built on the site of the monastic lands of Westminster Abbey, granted to an ancestor by Henry VIII. Tothill gave the commission to Sir Roger Pratt, an accomplished and historically important architect, very little of whose work now survives. Pratt was an admirer of Inigo Jones, and his masterpiece was Clarendon House in Piccadilly, a noble structure (to judge from a contemporary engraving) in an eclectic derivative of Palladianism, though it stood for less than twenty years before being pulled down by a property speculator. Having sent this reviewer to reference books to check his architectural history, Wilson cannot object if I convict him of a certain slight anachronism; in Part One of the novel, set in 1948, one of the characters says of Sir Roger Pratt, "He's not enough known. He had filthy luck. Most of his work's been pulled down or burned by accident." Coleshill, another imposingly elegant house by Pratt, was indeed burned down, but not until 1952.

Tothill House, as Wilson describes it, was designed by Sir Roger Pratt just before his death in 1684. Then, in the 1690s, the next Tothill, Sir Francis, commissioned Sir John Vanbrugh, even before he officially began his career as an architect with Castle Howard, to add a vast, exuberant baroque Great Hall to Pratt's restrained edifice. Tothill House is of central importance in *Setting the World on Fire*, both as setting and symbol; the opposition between Pratt's Palladianism and Vanbrugh's baroque pervades the text.

The precise pseudo-historical account of the house's origin is convincing; rather less so is its highly sketchful in subsequent history. We are told that at the end of the eighteenth century it passed via the female line from the Tothills to the Mossons, who had made a great deal of money from the West India trade—slaves, rum and sugar—and went on to make more money from banking and still more from marrying rich heiresses. Could any private family, however rich, one wonders, have kept up such a grand establishment in the heart of London, right through two world wars, into the era of egalitarian taxes and death-duties? If one presses hard on this point, history turns into myth. At the end of his foreword, Wilson archly and unnecessarily remarks, "It only remains to say that the house and its history are of course the inventions of the author." And so of course is the novel we are about to read; who needs such reminders?

Few houses in modern fiction are as grand and luxurious as Tothill, but it may have had a very humble and inconspicuous genesis in an earlier novel. In *No Laughing Matter*, the family patriarch, Joseph Stoker, says, "I'd me own room in those days. Didant live in. Tothill Street it was. You could spit on the Abbey."

Vanbrugh's Great Hall is dominated by a painting on the ceiling, continued down the walls, showing the fall of Phaethon. It is the work of Verrio, who had decorated Hampton Court; at the beginning of the novel, Sir Hubert Masson, Bart, tells his six-year-old nephew, Tom, that it was a pity the job could not have been given to Thornhill, who would have done it better. Wilson's novel is similarly dominated by the myth of Phaethon, the son of Helios and Clymene, destroyed by Zeus because he persuaded his father to let him drive the chariot of the sun but was too weak to control the horses, who rushed out of control, causing the sun to fall so close to earth as almost to set it on fire. The central figure of the novel—one rolls him that advisedly, for he lacks the substantiality implied by "character"—is Piers Masson, Tom's elder brother. In the opening pages he is a ten-year-old boy, touring delightedly on the black-and-white squared floor of the Great Hall, fascinated by the painting, high above his head, of Phaethon falling. (His little brother is terrified of it.)

The Mossons have just returned to Tothill House after a long wartime absence. Piers's father, Jerry Masson, is dead, shot down in the war, and he sees as a hero and exemplar of Phaethon, while Hitler, against whom Jerry fought, is a negative exemplar; the double aspect of the Phaethon myth, suggesting both noble aspiration and rash recklessness, is stressed throughout. In 1948 the Mossons consist of Piers and Tom; their widowed mother; their uncle, Sir Hubert; their grandmother, Jackie, Lady Masson, a former American heiress and now a keen practitioner of Christian Science; and her father-in-law, the oldest living Masson and titular head of the family, who is nearly ninety.

Superficially, this generational structure resembles the kind of thing Wilson has presented very effectively in the past, as in *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* and *No Laughing Matter*, though he is now much less concerned to present rounded characters, in either sense of the word. Nevertheless, the acerbic Lady Masson is a commanding example of Wilson's skill in inventing memorable females; and Sir Hubert, a languid admirer of the classical virtues of order and proportion exemplified in Pratt's architecture, seems like a survival from Wilson's earlier fiction; he engages in sacred masochistic practices which, in the end, are literally the death of him.

In Part Two the narrative moves forward to 1956-57. Tom and Piers are now at school at Westminster, where they are nicknamed Pratt and Van, in reference to the architects of Tothill House and their respective allegiances to them. Tom, who is quiet, sober and serious-minded, admires the classical; Piers, flamboyant, theatrical, imaginative, loves the baroque. This binary opposition is to dominate the rest of the novel. Piers, as befits an avatar of Phaethon, already manifests the qualities of a mythical Somnenkind, rather than an English stock-former, however rich and privileged. He is blond, beautiful and clever, a historian of promise whose scholarship papers for Christ Church are said to be the finest since the war, and a theatrical director of ingenuity and ambition.

At the opening of Part Two, Piers is putting on a much-admired school production of *Richard II*, in that play Richard cries out in his defeat:

> Down, down I come, like glist'ring Phaethon,
> Wanting the manage of unruly jades . . .

Here and subsequently Piers identifies himself emotionally and imaginatively with Phaethon. His next plan is far more ambitious: to direct, in another school production, a rarely performed opera by Lully called *Phaethon* which will be put on in Vanbrugh's Great Hall below Verrio's painting of the legend. Piers is spurred on in this ambition by discovering that Sir Francis Tothill was planning a production of Lully's *Phaethon* in the Great Hall in the 1690s, until this proposal was vetoed by King William, who could not abide French opera.

Piers eventually succeeds in this grand enterprise, but not until 1969, when as Sir Piers Masson—he has inherited Tothill House and his uncle's baronetcy—an internationally celebrated theatrical director, he finally, magnificently stages *Phaethon* amid the baroque splendours of Vanbrugh and Verrio. One of his most famous productions has been *The Master Builder*, another work about an aspiring hero who rises and falls; references to this play recur at intervals in a reinforcement of the prevalent symbolism. By the end of the novel Piers has not yet fallen, though he seems set on a perilous trajectory; but his brother Tom, who has become a lawyer and a cordon bleu cook, comes to a tragic end. Wilson has somewhat complicated the mythological pattern by giving a fear of falling to the sober Tom, rather than the high-flying Piers.

As this long though still sketchy precis indicates, *Setting the World on Fire* is an elaborately structured book; I am sure that academic commentators will soon find many more crafty parallels, convergences and contrasts in it. The fantasy in Wilson's earlier fiction is usually negative, cruel and evil. In this novel he has opened himself to hedonistic imaginings of beauty, wealth, glamour, energy and talent, giving them free rein, though with just enough control to turn fastest into art; the result can reasonably be called baroque. It is noticeable that much of the energy goes into describing, often in elaborate and beautiful language, artifacts and performances: architecture, painting, theatrical and operatic productions, gardens. Writers on Wilson, like Peter Faulkner in his new study, have emphasized the element of theatricality in his art, and in *Setting the World on Fire* it is dominant. But there is a price to be paid. Wilson has to tell a story moving forward in time, whereas his deep imaginative impulse seems to have been to present a static or spiralling enactment of the Phaethon myth, turning in and round on itself like the imagined baroque ceiling he describes so vividly. The human element and the business of story-telling tend to come off accountably, but the realistic novelist, who is interested in character and motives, cannot be wholly suppressed.

He emerges well on in the novel, with the account of a long, unhappy and intermittently funny family lunch party at Tothill House in 1957, reminiscent of comparable incidents in Wilson's earlier fiction; if this episode is rather less convincing, that may be because Wilson aims too widely in this novel. The shifts between fantasy and modern realism are disconcerting for the reader, who is not always able to suspend disbelief when required; particularly not, to speak for myself, in respect of the violent conclusion, which attacks me as quite unbelievable (and, on the plane of history, as a falsification, if that matters: there were no terrorist attacks in London in 1969).

Admiring the ingenuity and skill that has gone into this novel, I still found much of it crude and two-dimensional, particularly the Pratt-Vanbrugh, Palladian-baroque, classical-romantic oppositions that underlie its structure, and the overinsistent treatment of the Phaethon myth. Perhaps Wilson's commitment to this new departure in his art was not quite whole-hearted enough, tending to be impaired by the subdued but not silenced realistic observer of men and manners. It may be that such radical incorporations of myth and reconstructed legend in fiction need something like the manic intensity of a Thomas Pynchon, which this ultimately sensible and sociable Wilson lacks.

But one can have nothing but admiration for the courage which prompted him to this enterprise, as opposed to the easy attractions of self-imitation.

Peter Faulkner's intelligent and well-documented book is unfortunate in its timing, since the appearance of Wilson's new novel, which it does not mention, makes it already inadequate. It takes a steady chronological run through Wilson's literary career, imparting, section by section, a little biography, some account, drawn from his critical writings and from interviews, of Wilson's ideas about fiction, and a lot, a great deal too much in fact, of plot summary. It would have been a livelier, less blond book if Mr Faulkner had been prepared to engage more actively with Wilson's art and assumptions, whether from a position of qualified admiration or reasoned disagreement; it lacks the sense of a personal dimension that makes literary criticism interesting.

All the same, it contains pertinent remarks about the balance or tension between realism and fantasy in Wilson's fiction, his admiration for Dickens as the great writer who combined these qualities, and about Wilson's remarkable powers of mimetic recreation, whether of language or behaviour or cultured style. These powers, incidentally, are not much called on in *Setting the World of Fire*, where Wilson has abandoned some of the major strengths of his art. Mr Faulkner quotes from an interview which Wilson gave in 1976, where he seems to anticipate his new novel, saying he wanted to "pull off a book that is profligate and luxuriant, which people won't be loss in". It would be fair to describe this novel as profligate and luxuriant; whether or not people will be lost in it, I am uncertain. In fact, I am not sure how for there is room for people in it at all.

Emptying the handbag

EDITH REVELEY :
Skin Deep and Other Stories
208pp. Collins. £5.95.
0 00 222397 X

Edith Reveley's title suggests her concern with superficialities: she pins down important veritas by means of details of dress, speech, class and food. The content of her handbag sum up the neurotic ex-actress wife of a wealthy businessman: "...small change, traveller's cheques, credit cards, a compact, a tampon, a pearl earring, a glove, a broken Cartier's watch, a bottle of Vercuel, a vial of Magic, a capless gold pen . . .".

The author often makes use of a family or a small community (the diplomatic circle, an African settlement, a group of tourists or holiday makers) to reinforce the notion of group assumptions and her characters are generally wealthy and wealthy. Most of the stories turn on the unbalancing of a seemingly secure life. In "Brent" a self-possessed child suggests the possibility of hatred in place of maternal love; in "Gifts" a schoolgirl finds it safer to pretend she does not know her mother's friend is a shop-lifter. Often the intrusion of the coarse or grotesque (an argument, a raised voice, some insulting words) makes the milieu of well-ordered distinctions seem suddenly empty, less admirable and above all, less safe.

Despite a considerable skill in the creation of a believable world, Edith Reveley's description of character in terms of outward appearance produces the sort of detachment experienced when watching people in restaurants. However clever you are at cataloguing details, you are rarely sympathetic to the poor exposed creatures and in the end you do not care about their fate.

Lindsay Duguid

Roistering remorsefully

By Russell Davies

GAVIN EWART:
The Collected Ewart 1933-1980
41pp. Hutchinson. £10.
0 09 141000 2

A recent profile of Gavin Ewart in *The Guardian* drew attention to the important moment in the poet's career "when he decided just some dozen years ago to come down from Cambridge in 1983". That would be a hard trick to manage, even for Ewart—though when you consider that his underwent a remarkable poetic rebirth in the early 1960s, there is certain rightness to the date. Ewart Mark II would indeed be going up to Cambridge about now. But according to the same source, Ewart is currently turning out a poem a day, so by now he will have been moved, no doubt, to comment on this charming error in his own fashion. He has a well-controlled but still developing fondness for himself as a third-person topic.

Perhaps he was driven to this by reviewers. Certainly he's been called "quirky" so many times that you can't blame him for holding "Ewart" at arm's length from time to time, to see if it's true. He has done a lot of answering back, too, in his time, and repeated references to jaws and teeth suggest that he nourishes a small horror of having his work "consumed". His frustration is understandable. My impression is that even his most faithful fans have found it difficult to say what it is they really like about Gavin Ewart's work. A negative approach is easier: hence one of the angrier poems in this comprehensive collection, "It's Hard to Dislike Ewart"—a title phrase attributed to a *New Review* critic (who turns out to have been Colin Falck). The poet's response to this judgment is distinctly shirty, or as his Scottish ancestors might have had it, cearky:

I always try to dislike my poets,
it's good for them, they get so
uppity otherwise,
going around thinking they're
little geniuses—
but sometimes I find it hard.
They're so pathetic
in their efforts to be liked.

This is to take, I think, a more comparticled umbrage than is necessary. "Hard to dislike" may be a lazy phrase, but it is usually innocent of toxicity. (It generally means the critic disapproves of the principle, but finds himself enjoying the practice, and is slightly annoyed with himself for his inconsistency.) But Ewart's sense of hurt has acquired its own momentum, and it's interesting to see where it takes him:

When we're all out walking on
the cliffs
it's always pulling my coat with
'Sir! Oh Sir!'
and 'may I walk with you,
Sir?'...
I sort them out harshly with my
stick.

Through the ears of the bullying critic, his instincts the worst possible combination of Flashman and Dr Arnold, we hear the poet's schoolboy whine—it's a funny scene, but in the context of this lifetime's work, something more: a twinge from the old pre-war wound, a distant smart from the Public School. Ewart was "unjustly beaten", he writes elsewhere, and he remains on the look-out for it to happen again.

The early pages of *The Collected Ewart* bring us lengthy reminders that he was once the Public School Prodigy, the freak of Wellington. His first nationally published verses appeared in *New Verse* and the *Listener*, when he was seventeen—a couple of years younger than Dylan Thomas, and more than a couple of social steps nearer the fashionable half-landing between cynicism and scholarship. By the age of twenty, he was a name to be conjured with, which is what poetry enthusiasts more or less did with him for a time. Witness "Extract from Letter Received", which *New Verse* playfully printed in the summer of 1936: "Is it true that you really say Maurice Baldero? Are you also Gavin Ewart (aged 3½) Smith? If so who is Goetzy to be sure? . . . Is there any truth in the rumour that Mr Eliot is writing a cookery book?"

This all seems and was a very long time ago. Mr Eliot's new, long poem *Burnt Norton* ("rather a dull meditation on time and God and love" said a *New Verse* previewer) had just appeared; but it is the early Eliot, naturally enough, who speaks as often as not through the earliest Ewart. First in this book comes "Phallus in Wonderland", a poem in many voices which more than fulfils the promise of its title (the least it could do). It "was excluded by me from my first book of verse", Ewart writes, "because of its immaturity". He now includes it, I presume, for the same reason. Every man respects his origins, even when he hates them; and Ewart, in any case, had immersed himself in a richer variety of influences than he is commonly given credit for. There was poetry in his head before Auden arrived there. "Phallus", says his footnote, "shows very clearly the influences of T. S. Eliot, the Pound of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, and Ronald Bottrall. Auden, in 1933, was not yet making his presence felt." There was scarcely room for him as yet in these little verbaceous borders of the pupil Ewart, where rhyme is thought and the bulk of the thing *is* reputation:

Rudyard Kipling has
'Immoralised' Surrey;
Euripides has entombed
In Professor Gilbert Murray . . .
Ice deals in details,
Lecturing hard and subtle;
It is the sixteenth century look-cloud
Obscures the deep-sea calculus.
("Critic")

A sign of independent poetic life here behind the pose; but it is still the pose speaking. By the time Ewart's first collection of *Poems and Songs* appeared in 1939, a new voice had broken through, the voice of a responsible, faintly professional radicalism. The poem numbered "IX" is typical in its combination of humility and demagoguery: Though what I think is hardly news
Thoughts in my mind like boat-race
crews
Catch, overtake each other . . .
The little men who own it all
Sit in their offices, tidy, small . . .
Christ was decent; but his princes,
Resembling birds rather than beasts,
Aren't useful any more.

And so on. Auden has clearly arrived; and Ewart, catching from him the jingling, list-making burr, at times seems likely to depart in the same direction as MacNeice:

For the island that's not on the
charts,
For the whistle that isn't a bird,
The sly beckoning-in of the heart
To admit that all action's absurd,
For the rationalisation of fear,
For the man who's turned in and
not out,
For the sudden refusal to cheer,
All patrols look out!

(The small rhythmic booby-trap in line 3 is something that just happens with Ewart. Once he gets a good galloping beat going, he's extremely punctilious about keeping it going—except when he's not. See pages 371-72 of the book for more striking examples.) Among the other phenomena to which all patrols are alerted are two Audenesque favourites, "the virgin malicious and ill" and "the man who has seen his mistakes"; and Ewart's own prototypes of these characters make their appearance in two short early poems which show him operating at opposite extremes of his taste. "Miss Twye", a famous fragment much reprinted, is scarcely more than a momentary snigger, but a memorable one:

Miss Twye was soaping her
breasts in her bath
When she heard behind her a
meaning laugh
And to her amazement she
discovered
A wicked man in the bathroom
cupboard.

A nursery rhyme for adults, and a demonstration of the odd sense of inevitability the half-rhyme can sometimes induce. As for the man who has seen his mistakes, Ewart is growing up to be him, and a vital stage in the maturing process is recorded in "On the Author's Photograph", into whose sight (inter alia) of the private griefs of adolescence (and small virtues of adolescent poetry) are packed. It's a poem, as it happens, twisted and throbbing in a simpler way:

Yes, apprehensive eye,
We know averted head.
I know what I
Have done, have been dead.

Sleek head, you seal,
Shy pupil, still at school,
I know the pain you feel,
The pain of the fool.

In "Home" (reprinted under the heading "Other Pre-War Poems"), Ewart throws youth a fibbly farewell glance. "Written in 1938", remarks the exceedingly footnotic, "unemployed and living at home, full of adolescent rebelliousness and bad temper." The very qualities the decade had so often prized, you might think, though Ewart's edited does perhaps suggest a young man reversing almost self-destructively into a backwater: "O could one imagine an atmosphere fitter/To make one depressed, unhistorical and bitter?"

Ewart produced no more books until the 1960s. He passed the war busily as an anti-aircraft officer in North Africa and the Mediterranean, and he said that he felt overwhelmed by the scale of events. It must have been disconcerting, too, to be part of a campaign whose purposes overall were so much more laudable than the day-to-day patterns of life. Ewart may well have felt as though he were back in the Old School, but deprived now of all good reason to rebel. His creative record during the war, at all events, seems to be wholly understandable—I'm surprised there weren't more like this. He wrote Sade, just a handful of war-poems, but several of them are among his best. "Officers' Mess" is a conversational set-piece, a barroom monologue built of Forces banter and embodying much the same comic virtues (against a similar background) as today's supposed letters of Denis Thatcher in this magazine *Private Eye*.

It's going to be a thick night
tonight (and the eight before
was a thick one),
I've just seen the Padre popping
in to 'The Virgin's Womb' for
a quick one . . .

The mosque-like construction of Ewart's first verses had suggested that he might take pleasure one day in reconstructing tones of voice, and here for the first time he lets one rip for a page or so; and the result (preferred by Larkin for his *Oxford Book of Twentieth Century Verse*) is a triumphant marriage of speech-rhythm and poetic rhythm: there is no single phrase in it that the average trailed barfly couldn't or wouldn't have spoken. Nor is there a single note of moral complication, just a hook at the end to connect the experience to the next one of its kind:

Let's have the blackout boards up
and turn on the other light.
Yes, I think you can count on that,
old boy—tonight'll be a thick
night.

The obsidiousness is more willed, the moral tone more deliberately anaesthetized, with "When a Beau Goes In", a reflection on crashing planes:

When a Beau goes in,
into the drink,
It makes you think,
Because, you see, they always
sink . . .

Although it's perfectly certain
The pilot's gone for a Burton
And the observer too
It's nothing to do with you

And so Ewart might have come to believe himself, for all his public knew, until 1964, when his book *Lundunas* appeared. He had, in the meantime, written to the Muses on behalf of an ("Fair Nine I Return to us again") but they had taken their time in his case. By the 1940s, Ewart was established in advertising, in London, which had suddenly become a fashionable centre for most activities, even poetry. To look at *Londunas* now is to gain the mumbling impression that Ewart is swinging a leg high on to the passing bandwagon: the book begins, after all, with "Chelsea in Winter", and "Chelsea in Winter" begins "It's a long pull down the Kings Road"; but Ewart's King's Road turns out to be the Pier Hotel" and thence, via a couple of rhymes, to "the streets of hell". They are "trodden by Mr Eliot's feet", some of these streets, and one gets the impression, here and there, that Ewart would be comforted if some of the old faces (including his own) were to round the corner and make him feel at home again. The poems are long and discursive and have the air, especially in the Madame Tussaud's sequence, of keeping themselves amused while waiting for something to turn up:

Crippen is very mild, sad and
respectable
He had a raw deal from a ghostly
wife
And cut up rough.

Pleasures of the Flesh followed in 1966. It's as this points that it becomes clear how perfectly Ewart's creative life has conformed to the butterfly system. An active and noticeable caterpillar in youth, and seventy years a chrysalis, he struggles out sickly in *Londunas* and bursts forth, at last, into a gaudy maturity with *Pleasures*. The title, and the opening lines of the scene-setting "Anti-Poem", identify the release as a sexual one: admitting to lust will be one of Ewart's richest themes from now on, and the exercise of his hormones will remain an index to the health of his talent (it works both ways):

A small talent, like a small penis,
Should not be hidden lightly under
a bushel.

But shine in use, or exhibitionism.
Otherwise, how should one know
it was there?

Ewart has faithfully followed his own advice. Plain use, and exhibitionism, are cheerfully flung together: there is no impudent section of his work marked "Fun". In *Pleasures of the Flesh*, there is certainly no need for one, since the whole collection carries a tone of manic resistance to the ageing process. It helps to remember that London in those days was slightly potty with its own success: it was a New Elizabethan Age in PVC boots, non-stop raciness under the Red, White and Blue. Plugged by the thighs of teenagers, Ewart is beginning to feel what it must be like to be old:

She pulleds him from a window in
Soho
A "business girl" of twenty.
He is a florid businessman of fifty.
(Their business is soon done.)

But fantasy is never at an end, and it goes battering on through these pages, flirting merrily with Surrealism, sneaking Ewart into the calmer bend of Sigmund Freud (the "S.F." in the title is, for once, the nearest we get in Science Fiction), and even predicting the end of Ewart's long servitude in offices: "It is better to be a scribe/than lucking in the salt-mines . . . /Every body wants to be a scribe."

Ewart has been a scribe almost throughout the 1970s, displaying an unmanageable copiousness which he's possibly right in believing critics resent, somewhere behind those ferocious jaws of theirs. (With his screen in right books in the decade, Ewart has, for one thing, taken a hefty slice of their reviewing space.) Of this magnificent overproduction Anthony Thwaite has written that "there's something both attractively and distastefully offhand about Ewart's poems", and this remains true. Since the offhand poem is some thing his heavy-verse contemporaries are keen to avoid, Ewart actually stands to gain by dashed Verses that seem to earn their whether they succeed, fail, or suddenly let themselves down, begin to have their extra curiosity value.

Since 1971 or so, Ewart has been for good or ill, the star of his production. The very title of the *Gavin Ewart Show* proclaims it. In curious way, he has been the sort of poet whom one "knows" as one might an actor or a musician or a singer. Ewart never produces a tight, interlocking performance at book length, but we singers with their "shows" yet there are always one or two songs you play over and over. To have established this kind of career at all is a very considerable achievement. It involves not introducing a great many poems whose charm is great at first but not slow to wear away if the Coward has been bundled down to us. Noel Coward is a Master (and true"); and Ewart's recent habit of adopting the metrical patterns of famous verses (filling out lyrics, we might call it) often strikes us as more of a help to Ewart, as a stimulus for getting poems written, than of emotional use to the reader. (A notable exception is "The Gods' Sex", his Dorothy-inspired farmyard horror-story from Northern Ireland where the nastiness of the verse themselves entirely kill off the jolly full side of the emulative process.)

As for Ewart's "world" (and his satirical taste for stuff marketed devices will surely lead him one day, three days in entirely a volume, *The World of Gavin Ewart*), he has described it thus:

For us the world is one huge object
random with art and wars and
inventions
the very lack of pattern it
pattern.

And so it is with the work that pours out of Ewart. His events are a drunk of poetic pilot (was it from Wellington that the pilot school would at large during "boring" as its favourite expression of disgust?) and a flowing vision that would sound fustian and sex-in-the-head if you overheard it but which Ewart sets down boldly as sex-on-the-page. I feel there is an element of perfectly conscious campaigning in this—Hollbrook and Whitehouse are the pilots of the enemy tandem—and there is no doubt that Ewart will have blended many a blueness in his time. Who would have thought that "In the Saloon Bar", introduced by an genial simile, would shortly move so low?

Each Cornish pasty on the bar-top
Is ridge-backed like a stegosaurus.
As the waiter remembers
A muff-diver's treasure trove:
a piece of blue tissue paper wedged
between the lips,
the lorgy of a tampax.
Tempting the wild expressions of
his love.

1983 or no, mature students have been sent down for less.

Two epitaphs, in all but name, close the collection, one in the body of the book, one banished to the dust-jacket. Their judgments are not easily gainsaid. The first: "There's more of him than we expected, (yes, but not yet too much) . . . He wrote some silly poems, and some of them were funny" (yes, certainly, as far as that goes). The second: "He's typical of his age. Well, here I'm not so sure. . . It is an age characterized by (in Ted Walker's phrase) a "cautious hoarding of grief". There is plenty of it, even in suffering. With Ewart, instead, we have the paradox of desperation, and a roistering remorse. It is the odd mixture, and I don't pretend to be fully used to it yet. But having taken the long way round himself, Ewart presumably won't mind waiting for the rest of us to catch up.

Floating Gardens

Dusk drifts down in speckles, a dull scotfall
sticking to each clean edge and blade.
Am I asleep awake? The marigolds
light sudden, waxy lamps that flicker out
in morning, leaving me afraid,
as the mind's secrets open, clear as stare.
They show me another garden where the soft
breath of the dying grass you whirled like grain
and scattered, moving patient as the sun
along each brightening swathe, warms the air
and makes your absence almost tangible.
Do flowers fear the dark
and shiver for the hands that tended them,
busy now with dinners, conversation?
Rooms are real, glowing through their glass
where families root and bloom, solid as brickwork.
But the gardens are lost to this world.
They whisper. They know it is not easy
to be sure of what we are or who we love.

Carol Rumens

The onward march of obsolescence

By Denis Donoghue

GRANT WEBSTER:
The Republic of Letters
A History of Postwar American Literary Opinion
381pp. Johns Hopkins University Press. £13.50.
0 8018 2175 4

Grant Webster's theme is not as large as the title and subtitle of his book suggest. He has not written a history of American literary opinion since 1945. He has studied two schools of criticism, the New Critics and the New York Intellectuals, concentrating on the theories of literature implicit or explicit in their work. Apparently indifferent to their writings on particular authors, he has not reported on Kenneth Burke's work on Coleridge, John Crowe Ransom's on Milton, W. K. Wimsatt's on Pope, Lionel Trilling's on Arnold, or Irving Howe's on Hardy. He is interested only in the production of theory.

Mr Webster's method is the application of Thomas S. Kuhn's ideas of paradigms to the history of literary theories. Kuhn argued in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962) that "normal science" at any moment made research firmly based upon one or more scientific achievements; achievements that a scientific community acknowledges for a time as supplying the foundation for its further practice. Such achievements, so far as they are recognized and accepted, become paradigms or models for further research. Kuhn's concept of the paradigm has been widely discussed, and extended, with varying degrees of refinement, to the understanding of the social sciences. Mr Webster proposes to use the word *charter* rather than *paradigm* because he regards the former word as more accurate in referring to a set of literary values, based upon the accepted authority of the writer who has propounded them. T. S. Eliot, for instance, was the source of authority for the New Critics.

The trouble with Kuhn's concept of paradigm is that it does not apply to the history of literary theory. Indeed, Kuhn himself has pointed out that it does not apply to the history of art. A painting painted four hundred years ago may be as fully present to us as one painted today. In Kuhn's version, "Picasso's success has not relegated Rembrandt's paintings to the storage vaults of art museums". Science supersedes its past; art does not. Literary theory is not a science; it is best understood as a rhetoric. It is possible to write a history or a narrative of literary theories, but not on the basis that one paradigm is replaced by another, as in the history of scientific research. To take an example from Kuhn's book: in the early twentieth century the theory that light is transverse wave motion was ousted by the theory that light is photons—entities exhibiting some characteristics of waves and some of particles. There is no such moment in twentieth-century literary criticism or literary theory. No theory of literature is overthrown. Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* provided the authority for a school of criticism at the University of Chicago when R. P. McKeon, R. S. Crane, Elder Olson, and other scholars were in residence: these texts are still available as the source of an authentic criticism.

Mr Webster recognizes that in literary theory one paradigm does not oust another, but in his account of particular critics he has given himself to the terminology of replacement and obsolescence. He says, for instance, that a certain notion held force until the mid-1950s, when the rise of the neo-Romantic poetry of the "Beats" and critical interest in Romantics like Blake, Wordsworth and Shelley expressed by critics like Northrop Frye, Geoffrey Hartman and Harold Bloom led to the obsolescence of Eliot's tradition and the creation of yet another critical revolution". Later in the book he reports that "the gestalt has shifted, a critical revolution has occurred, and Formalism is finished as an active force among contemporary theorists". I am afraid these reports are premature. Mr Webster's book is thoughtless, jejune, and, I am sorry to have to say, dotty. He has put Kuhn's concept of the paradigm out of wretched use: indeed, it is clear that he has insisted on applying it where it demonstrably does not apply, and solely for the pleasure of describing the work of his betters as obsolete.

According to Mr Webster, the New Criticism is better described as Tory Formalism. Three stages may be recognized in its development: one, in which the Tory charter is issued by Eliot, Tate, and Ransom; two, the Age of Explication, from 1938 to 1948, in the work of Brooks, Blackmur, Winters, Robert Penn Warren, and others; and three, the Age of Theory, when the doctrines of Tory Formalism were expounded by Brooks, Wimsatt, René Wellek, and Murray Krieger. To be a Tory, according to Mr Webster, is to espouse permanent values, a stable society, a belief in original sin, tradition, and Agrarianism. The "etiology", as he calls it, of the Tory charter has five stages:

(1) *defeat*, a sense of the loss of value in society caused by the collapse of traditional values after World War I; (2) *contemptus mundi*, a strategy of exclusion which separates the literary world from the real world, author or audience; (3) *the word as world*, the creation of a new world of poetry—constructed around the Tory struggle between good and evil—which functions as a spiritual home; (4) tradition, the rewriting of literary history to make that literature good which expresses Tory principles; and (5) *the sacred word*, the assumption of God or an aesthetic absolute as the foundation for the whole complex Tory critical charter.

A word about each of these. (1) *Defeat* is described mainly by reference to Eliot and the Agrarians, the loss of Old England and the Old South. (2) *Contemptus mundi* is evidenced, apparently, by the Tory Formalists in their hostility to science and positivism. (3) The word *as world* is "the creation of a bravo new world of poetry to live in" as a refuge from an incurigibly fallen condition in which we otherwise live. (4) Tradition means Eliot's invocation of Virgil, Dante, and "the ordered Latin culture of Europe", regionalism, too. (5) *The sacred word* means "belief in God and in divine order in the world".

It is clear that this miserable penned applies to the New Critics in general only in the sense of not applying in any of them in particular. It becomes a bizarre fantasy when considered in its pretended bearing upon such works as Kenneth Burke's *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, Ransom's *God without Thunder*, Winters' *Maule's Curse*, and Eliot's *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*.

On particular critics, Mr Webster is insolent. Eliot "is the quintessence of the Puritan, the WASP and this is not everyone's cup of tea". On Tate: "Only by considering narrowness of sympathy and narcissism as virtues of the mind can Tate be accounted a major practical critic". Blackmur "remains in the seventies the forgotten prophet of modernism". On Winters: "His reputation as one of the cranks of criticism is just". On Burke: "He seems best regarded, then, as an old-time American crank inventor who might have been Edison except that his work lacks any relation to reality outside his own mind". On Krieger: "our best example of the superannuated critic". On Austin Warren: "In large part the lack of attention to Warren's work seems justified".

We turn from these fulminations to Mr Webster's account of the New York Intellectuals, in a chapter subtitled "The Bourgeois Avant-Garde". The point of this jibe is that these critics started out in the 1930s as radicals and ended as comfortable bourgeois professors. In their pura days they felt considerable tension between "social reality and avant-garde tastes"; defining society in quasi-Marxist terms, they took the less wanted to lay claim to a high, Symbolist literature, the masterpieces of Modernism. Mr Webster regards these men and women as journalists, bright enough but uneducated, parasitic upon the ideas of others. The only interest they offer is the spectacle of people who want to be bourgeois and avant-garde at the same time.

This section of Mr Webster's book begins with an account of *Partisan Review*: it would be useful if far better accounts of *PR* were not already in place. Mr Webster's argument is that the magazine gathered to itself a number of writers who shared certain attitudes: hostility to bourgeois society, at least in theory; distrust of universities; opposition to "mass culture"; alienation, accepted as a way of life. Over a period of some years, these critics defined their interests more sharply. They ignored the literature written before 1800, took no interest in questions of language and style, confined their attention to the novel (foreign novels being read in translation), and represented as crisis the fate of living in the twentieth century. In the 1950s, the tension between social reality and the literature of Modernism collapsed, and the critics took to the hated universities in search of tenured posts and reliable salaries. "The evidence is that the Intellectuals had put the avant-garde life behind them by about 1953." Or, in another formulation: "From Mother Bloor to George Plimpton, from *New Masses* to *Vogue*, from Williamsburg to the West Side, the Intellectuals have made that immense American journey from the lower to the upper middle class".

Mr Webster's representative man in this domestic drama is Lionel Trilling, "a critic without a cause". Or rather, a critic who had a cause and lost it. "Like most other intellectuals, Trilling refuses to betray his tradition, refuses to respond to the realities of postwar America, and he so long dates himself." His later career exhibits the collapse of the charter of the intellectuals "into obsolescence". Mr Webster thinks it appropriate to report that Trilling received a fee of $10,000 for his lecture "Mind in the Modern World"; a thirty-eight page lecture, "it may be (at $268 a page) the most expensive literary criticism ever produced". Always on the watch to see one of these critics accepting an appointment, an honorary degree, or even a salary, Mr Webster writes of Irving Howe with a peculiarly personal vindictiveness. He quotes a perfectly reasonable and humane statement from one of Howe's essays and adds this gratuitous piece of mockery: "For God, for Irving, and St George Howe is quite right in affirming that freedom is essential to the avant-garde intellectual, but he is less aware that in gaining tenure he has lost his own avant-garde position."

Howe, described more than once in this book as "the noble Howe", did not say that freedom is essential to the avant-garde intellectual, he demanded such freedom for everyone; he asked people to speak "for the values of liberalism, for the politics of a democratic radicalism, for the norms of rationality and intelligence, for the standards of literary seriousness, for the life of the mind as a humane dedication". The fact that Mr Webster responds to such an invitation only with a cheap slur shows how necessary Howe's intervention continues to be.

Mr Webster complains that the Tory Formalists "invoke no particular reader but an Ideal Reader. It is clear that the only critic he himself admires is the Ideal Critic. Such a person, I judge from Mr Webster's book, would have the following characteristics. First, he would have taken the precaution of having himself born at the right time. Murray Krieger made a serious mistake in this regard. Born in 1923, he was only three years old when *The Sacred Wood* was published, so his desire to become a Tory Formalist was out of phase with the nativity. Second, the Ideal Critic would have no convictions, no beliefs, no religion, no politics. Travelling light, he would be ready to jump on any bandwagon that came along if he were to lapse into a conviction, he would be prepared to trade it in for a new model every year or two, otherwise he would suffer obsolescence. Third, the Ideal Critic would recognize a Zeitgeist as soon as it appeared on the horizon, and proclaim himself its servant: the service would last as long as Zeitgeist remained in force.

Mr Webster's book presents, I am afraid, a programme for slaves. According to him, the worst misfortune is to be dated. He quotes Elizabeth Hardwick on Norman Mailer's *An American Dream*: "*An American Dream* is a fantasy of vengeful murder, callous compilations and an assortment of dull cruelties: it is an intellectual and literary disaster, poorly written, morally foolish and intellectually empty." Mr Webster does not consider whether this judgment is right or wrong: the question does not arise. Mailer's novel, along with that Mr Wilson conserves as further indication of the Zeitgeist of the 1960s, "the 'White Negro' or hipster philosophy of N. O. Brown, Herbert Marcuse, William Reich, and Marshall McLuhan, constitute the historical reality" of that decade. Those, like Elizabeth Hardwick, who disapproved of *An American Dream* are by definition dated.

The book ends with a section on Edmund Wilson. Mr Webster's name in these pages is patronizing rather than disliking. Wilson was merely a journalist, after all, he did not pretend to do any heavy thinking or compose a theory of literature. He made himself a character rather than a critic. Mr Webster ascribes to Wilson "the creation of a fictional self rather than an articulated charter". The other New York Intellectuals are sitting ducks, sufficiently, but Wilson was clever enough to present himself only as a moving target. Mr Webster makes an interesting point, that Wilson saw himself in his later years as an old fogey but also as an Oliver Wendell Holmes; this is true.

On the whole, I find the book a very bad piece of work: ignorant, petty, and crude. I am dismayed to find it published by an important university press, in a large volume. Mr Webster says, "I will continue his history by examining the charters of such critical schools as psychological and myth criticism, structuralism and hermeneutics, the American Studies movement, and the counterculture of the sixties." He evidently considers this a promise. I consider it a threat.

Rebuff, revenge, reconciliation

By Francis Huxley

LEWIS CARROLL:
The Story of Sylvie and Bruno
Illustrated by Harry Furniss
329pp. Macmillan. £3.95.
0 333 29061 5

C. L. Dodgson died in 1898, and six years later his youngest brother Edwin took it on himself (no doubt with the approval of the rest of the family) to edit the two volumes of *Sylvie and Bruno* to make them more suitable for children. He did this by reprinting only those portions that dealt with the Fairy children who give the book its title, in the hope that what was now *The Story of Sylvie and Bruno* "would become as popular as the Alice books by the same author".

Edwin had cause to think that the original was not generally appreciated. When Dodgson died, *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) was in its 156th thousand, *Alice Through the Looking-glass* (1871) in its 107th, and the *Nursery Alice* in its eleventh. *Sylvie and Bruno* (1889) had not done badly, being in its thirteenth thousand; but its conclusion (1893) had only reached its third. Stuart Dodgson Collingwood, Dodgson's nephew and biographer, had already pointed out some reasons for this relative unpopularity: the book had no unity and was not an artistic success; the attempt to combine a fairy tale with a novel was, surely, a mistake; and the religious and political arguments it contained did little but scare off potential Sylvie-lovers.

Edwin's edition did away with the last two objections, though at the price of making the first one more noticeable, since the novel he cut out was meant to be read in tandem with the fairy tale. But there must have been other reasons for the dearth of Sylvie-lovers, or we should not have had to wait until now for the republication of the *Story*. It bears out Carroll's admissions in the preface (not here reprinted) that he was abandoning the style that made Alice books so intriguing (because, he said, of the numerous imitators it had attracted), and that he had used a factitious narrative to stitch together a vast accumulated chaos of fancies and observations. The slackness resulting from these procedures is visible everywhere in the book which, as Collingwood claimed, marks an epoch in its author's life, though not only because it contains "all the ideals and sentiments which he held most dear".

What led to this new epoch is a question that Carrollians often pass by, as though the sentiments their author came to hold so dear were reactions to his having fallen amongst thieves. A sympathetic reading of his Diaries confirms this suspicion, and allows a latter-day Samaritan at least to reconstruct the scene of the crime. First, then, we must remember the boating trip in 1862 on which Carroll had made Alice the present of *Alice in Wonderland* for her May birthday, and that he continued to enjoy her company until June, 1863. But he delays his next visit to the Deanery for six months, and on May 12, 1864, he complains that he has applied in vain to take her and her sisters on the river. Then, on May 11, 1865, he meets Alice in the quadrangle, who "seems changed a good deal, and hardly for the better—probably going through the usual awkward age of transition".

These entries signal the estrangement that had come between Dodgson and the Liddells for what may have been several reasons. One of them, it is widely suspected, is that the Liddells took exception to the attentions he was paying Alice, and found it politic to rebuff them. *Rebuffed* he certainly was, for it was not until May 18, 1867 (nb these Mays!) that he paid a visit to Mrs Liddell and had a long chat with her, "a thing I have not done for years". Three days later he is reading Galatians in Greek ("I have long neglected one means of Grace, the reading of the Bible"), and then on June 24, at 2 am, he is "Sitting up writing, and listening to the bell in the Corn Exchange. I have spent some hours writing a paper (I have had the idea for two or three days) for Aunt Judy's Magazine, to be called Bruno's Revenge".

"Bruno's Revenge" was the start of that accumulation which was to become *Sylvie and Bruno*. It is a moral fable, and may be read as the allegory of Dodgson's recent history. Instead of a heroine, he for the first time has a boy hero. This young fairy, however, is not altogether good, for he is intent upon spoiling Sylvie's garden, to vex her for making him finish his lessons. (Because, of course, they *lessened* him, as the Gryphon could have explained.) The narrator persuades his little friend that a much better revenge would be to weed the beds, transplant some wild violets, and set coloured pebbles out in rows. Which done, Sylvie comes and is beautifully surprised, and the two Fairies melt into reconciling tears, kisses and hugs.

Ah, would but that it were that easy in real life! Would, too, that his estrangement from Alice and the later accommodation he reached with Mrs Liddell had not cost him so dear. For though there is a quantity of other business in the story, ingenious whimsy and simulations of children's prattle, it has none of the bracing raillery of the Alice books which so deftly combined his affection, his wit and his scorn for the copy-book maxims of the well-governessed world. The thieves he had fallen amongst (the first, of course, was the Knave of Hearts) had stolen his inspiration.

Carroll had an extraordinary talent for rattling off stories, verse and nonsense, all on the spur of the moment. But these only became especially delightful when he took his cue from the interjections of his audience so that, as Isa Bowman wrote, "one felt that one had helped to make the story, and it seemed a personal possession". The *Alices* are full of such flashes of mutual inspiration and Carroll ever acknowledged Alice as his first and best Muse. What then might he do after his application to go boating once more on the Pierian river had been turned down? Plainly, none of his other child friends of that time really inspired him: so we must conclude that "Bruno's Revenge" was the story he, Lewis Carroll, told to himself, Bruno, after he had been inspired to forgive the Liddells for teaching him a lesson.

Dodgson's original sketch, and Furniss's finished drawing, for one of the illustrations to Sylvie and Bruno; *from* The Letters of Lewis Carroll.

The nature of this lesson is to be found in the preface to *Sylvie and Bruno* where, after putting on record a number of morally desirable projects and apologising for bringing nonsense for children into the same book as some of the gravest thoughts of human life, he preaches the Christian ideal. This, the true object of life, leads to "the development of *character*, the rising up to a higher, nobler, purer standard, the building up of the perfect Man—". These distressingly lifeless sentiments required the customary sacrifice, and what he offered up for oblation was his miraculous animus, so responsive and flirtatiously exact, that, if Alice could say "Really, I don't think—" it would instantly retort "Then you shouldn't talk."

In *Sylvie and Bruno* such passages of arms are largely to be found as infantilities in Bruno's mouth. His sister Sylvie is no Alice: she may be a delicious Fay, but she has not a scrap of Alice's elfin delight in disrespectful imaginings. Granted, there were limits to what Carroll would allow, such as jesting on sacred matters. All the same he did sometimes sail close to the wind, while at night he found himself plagued by "unholy thoughts" that he could only keep at bay by feats of mental arithmetic. In *Sylvie and Bruno*, however, it seems he nailed his animus by making it live in a treacle-well—the well having previously housed the three little sisters in *Alice in Wonderland*, while the treacle was of the kind that, as he said elsewhere, ineffectually conceals a medicine. It was only after some years on this regime that he gave his animus full play again, in writing squibs on University politics against the Liddells—on grounds of principle, of course, *not just* for personal revenge.

The complete *Sylvie and Bruno* is the result of Carroll's hard-won victory over his own genius. The Fairy tale deals with the motherless children of the Warden of Outland, who is shortly to be king of Elfland. This Prospero has a brother, the Vice-Warden (the pun is intentional, and also invokes Dean Liddell as the then Vice-Chancellor of Oxford) who with his wife cheats the Warden of his rights and wealth, and plans to have their Calibanic son acknowledged as the rightful heir. There is a mad Gardener singing how he saw something that was a something else, the embodiment of Carroll's erstwhile familiar spirit; and a couple of Gonzalo-ish Professors, the one uselessly inventive and the other so often asleep as to make his waking thoughts (whether holy or unholy) quite inconsequential.

The narrator witnesses these goings-on whenever he drops off into a trance, but awakens to find that the characters of his waking life have a strange similarity to those of the Fairy one. Thus Sylvie is the Fairy equivalent of Lady Muriel Orme, and her brother Bruno of Dr Arthur Forester, Lady Muriel's faint-hearted lover. The first book ends with her engaged to her cousin Eric, and the Vice-Warden self-installed as Emperor. But see—in the next volume Eric is found wanting in Christian belief, and Lady Muriel nobly released from her engagement. She then marries Arthur, but the moment they are wed he goes to play doctor in a neighbouring fisherman's village that is being ravaged by the plague—a lesson to us all. Is his self-sacrifice rewarded by a martyr's death? Yes . . . no. For Eric finds him only half-dead, and he is nursed back to life by his cherished adoring wife. Curtain on the novel: the Fairy tale ends with the repentant Vice-Warden, his wife being turned into a porcupine and Sylvie and Bruno into the sweetest of angels.

Curious, is it not, to find a fairy brother and sister who become a worldly husband and wife? Or, following Florence Lennon, should we say son and mother, even though this change be hardly for the better? But the reader of the *Story* will not notice the possibility of such awkward transitions, since they depend on those boring bits Edwin excised. Edwin also excised Carroll's prefaces, in which he might have taken so heavy the proposal to edit a Shakespeare for girls that would be properly "expurgated". (Carroll put this word into quotes himself.) Did he also read what Carroll had to say about Bowdler, whose edition filled him "with a deep sense of wonder, considering what he has left in, that he should have left anything out!" For in 1914, so Macmillans tell me, Edwin's *Story* was republished, but abbreviated to a quarter of its length. A final expurgation, one might say, of the original author's complicity with the thieves he had fallen among so long ago.

The crowded Victorian day

By Francis Watson

MORTON N. COHEN (Editor):
The Letters of Lewis Carroll
2 Volumes
1,244pp. Macmillan. £17.50 each.
0 333 08979 0
0 333 24823 1

Content as many may be with two Alices and a Snark, we find ourselves, on knocking at the door of their retiring author, in the presence of a polymath impelled, especially in his later years, by the desire to be useful with his pen. The ten books and forty-eight pamphlets and papers on logic and mathematics represent, as calculated by Dodgson's most recent biographer Anne Clark, only one fifth of what he published during his lifetime. Equally serious about the composition and recording of his correspondence—even though so much of it was done to amuse—he is believed to have written well over 100,000 letters. Of these Morton N. Cohen, in the dedicated labour of two decades, assisted by Roger Lancelyn Green (responsible for the illuminating selection from the Dodgson Diaries) has uncovered upwards of 4,000 and reduced them, by a process sufficiently justified in the preface, to these two stout volumes, and a total of 1,305.

Was there some connection between the *cacoethes scribendi* and the Dodgson stammer? Though this was not severe enough to prevent lecturing and preaching, concern and consultations *on the* subject occur frequently in the correspondence, and he was also deaf in one ear from an infantile complaint. Whatever the answer one is left to wonder, surveying through these letters his other activities—his Oxford duties, his multifarious interests, his efforts on behalf of friends, relatives and strangers, and his infinite capacity for taking trains which someone has justly described as a peculiarly Victorian trait—whether the nineteenth-century day was not, as in some Carrollian *jeu d'esprit*, longer than our own.

It is no fault of Professor Cohen and his colleague, or of their diligently sought contacts, that the period April 1858 to May 1862, which is missing from the Diaries in the British Library (though originally available to the first biographer Collingwood) is all too thinly covered by surviving letters. No fresh evidence turns up [save for a Christmas acrostic of 1861] for Dodgson's early relationship with Alice Liddell and her sisters and parents, while the only reference to a possible "row on the river" with "some Liddells as companions" is a brief invitation to Robinson Duckworth in April 1864, about two years after the definitive excursion. There is no clue, either, to the unresolved question of Dodgson's reasons for abandoning, in about 1880, his ardent and fruitful photographic activity, turning instead to drawing from child-models.

But now for some of the riches. A few of the letters have, of course, already been published elsewhere. But this chronological extension of our acquaintance with the man and the author has to solve the problem of presenting the other parties to the exchange. The pursuit of Tennyson provides an example. Dodgson's interest in poetry was often coloured by the niggling approach of a logician (though we find him daringly recommending Christina Rossetti, on the strength of *Goblin Market*, as a first female Laureate). On his first meeting with Tennyson at Coniston in 1857, recorded in the Diaries as *dies notabilis*, he had pestered him with alternative readings of some lines from *Maud* which the poet believed to be perfectly clear. Nor was he cured of this addiction when he later visited the sometimes testy poet at Farringford. But the breach with the Tennysons and the subsequent bid for reconciliation would be meaningless without the cold draft in Mrs Tennyson's hand, which is therefore quoted among the elaborate notes which are mercifully supplied with, rather than after, the text. These form a remarkable documentation in which, among other things, Dodgson's innumerable (but enumerated) assembly of young girl-friends have been hunted from birth to death and even to their descendants. The single letter from a different hand included in the collection itself comes, in Dodgson's own childhood, from his father, and proves that among so much that the son inherited from the gifted Archdeacon was a sense of the ridiculous in its appeal to the very young.

The humour and inventiveness of the letters to children, with puzzles and games to supplement the fun, need no recommendation. They are a shower of sparks from the pyrotechnic display of that special genius manifested in the books that broke the tradition of juvenile literature to enslave an adult audience. The stalking of a shy author, falling at times into inept comparisons with the tragic fixation of Ruskin, has had a prurient element which Dodgson's letters to and about his pre-nubile friends should surely dispel. There is a more interesting ambivalence to be considered. On the one hand are circumspection and decorum in the approach, including the negotiations for nude or semi-nude models for the camera though *even so* there were rebuffs, delicate moments, occasional disasters such as the kiss for a girl whom he thought to be fourteen but who turned out to be seventeen. On the other hand there is the explicit and conscientious defiance of Mrs Grundy. In a superb index which Dodgson himself would have applauded, that lady gets twenty-seven entries, increasing in the advancing years when he firmly claimed the privilege of a bachelor to entertain ladies who had outgrown—as he wistfully reflects—the unique magnetism of childhood.

The insistence on playing it his way can be seen again in letters which, whether considering ordainment or advising others, outline the views of a devout Christian who, in a time of often shrill debate, applied to conventional religion the tests both of a humanitarian and a logician. He was as conscious of moral regulations as of class distinctions. When his admired friend Ellen Terry left her husband Watts to live with Godwin he felt obliged to break with her, but when she later became Mrs Wardell he was not only reconciled but able to show sympathy with the whole sequence in a letter of 1880.

Then there is the lion-hunting (not merely, one feels, for the camera) which requires one or other of his many epistolary styles. The greatest of many catches was Lord Salisbury, which brought with it an intimacy emboldening Dodgson to seek patronage for others and even to offer political suggestions. Becoming a lion himself he shunned the hunters and strove always to separate Carroll from Dodgson. In his dealings with publishers, illustrators and dramatizers he kept as much as possible in his own hands, combining careful financial calculations with a generous distribution of free and often signed copies (where are they now?) not only to individuals but to hospitals and orphanages.

These are well-made volumes, with an excellent selection of photographs and drawings. Should the Carroll industry require anything further, there is another book to be made from the intriguingly various letters to contemporary journals.

The statesman as victim

By Caroline Moorehead

ROBERT KATZ:
Days of Wrath: the Public Agony of Aldo Moro
352pp. Granada. £8.95.
0 246 11140 2

When Aldo Moro, the kidnapped President of Italy's Christian Democrat Party, was found dead, drowned in his own blood in the boot of a car, Romans took to the streets carrying placards: "Aldo Moro has been assassinated. His belief in Liberty lives on in our hearts." If the outburst of public grief says much about an act of political terrorism that kept an entire country in suspense for fifty-four days, it is also not without its somewhat grim irony. The posters had been printed by the Christian Democrat Party a month before.

Robert Katz has now reconstructed what happened, from the morning of the kidnap itself, when Aldo Moro was on his way to Parliament for the debate on whether the government should accept, for the first time ever in Italy, the support of the Communist Party—something that had come about largely through his own efforts—to the precarious political aftermath of the assassination. It is a skilful book in which the arts of a thriller writer are combined with the critical curiosity of a reporter. It does not matter that little of the material is new. There could be few surprises in an event unique in the recent history of terrorism for its extreme publicity. Everyone—politicians, journalists, the Pope, Moro's family, foreign governments, even Moro himself—felt bound to comment on the case and on each other.

Where *Days of Wrath* is fascinating is in its detail; names, places, protagonists, phone calls, the long saga of political and private manipulation that went into this full-blown Italian theatre of terrorism. There were absurdities such as "Plan Zero", the top-secret contingency plan for such an emergency, which someone had forgotten to have typed and sent to the police, or the intervention of mediums, graphologists, psychologists and experts on mind-altering drugs called in to help.

Robert Katz makes no more effort to conceal his own admiration for Moro and his family than to hide his contempt for those in power, who, bogged down in a morass of outrage, suspicion and the desire for personal gain, juggled with Moro's destiny. He describes the different parties and their leaders: the Communists' fears that the Christian Democrats would crumble under pressure and negotiate, the Christian Democrats' "suffering intransigence", the Socialists' political opportunism in becoming the doves of the affair.

He is good, too, on Moro himself, quoting liberally from the lucid and powerful letters (Moro is said to have written about seventy during his imprisonment) that appeared day after day in the Italian papers. These letters are perhaps the most extraordinary documents to emerge from the whole event—at first discursive, then exhortatory, then implacable and thundering ("I tell you clearly: for my part, I will absolve and justify no-one"), finally begging ("I implore the Pope to do *more*"), and ending with the now famous words: "I ask that neither the authorities of the state, nor the men of the party participate at my funeral."

It is hard not to be touched by Moro. His oratory from beyond the grave, his dignity when fifty friends signed a letter that declared him to be mad, make one forget that as head of the Foreign Office in five different governments he knew better than anyone the peccadillos, deals and cover-ups of a party whose cupboards groan under the weight of skeletons. The fact that Moro (as his friend Leonardo Sciascia pointed out in a book published shortly after the kidnapping) never cracked, makes it easier to forget his earlier duplicity. On trial for twenty-one days, knowing full well that the Christian Democrats in power, whose futures he had shaped were going to do nothing to save him, he revealed none of the scandals that political circles in Italy feared he would reveal.

Now that Moro is dead and the drama of the event has receded, Katz speculates and re-examines some of the rumours that circulated during the summer of 1978. Had Moro, architect of the dreaded "opening to the left", been kidnapped by the CIA who are known to be opponents of a left-wing Italy? Was he a pawn in the game of "trans-national terrorism"? Neither Katz nor anyone else has been able to establish exactly what pressures were brought to bear on the Italian government during Moro's captivity, though it is interesting to read of the presence in Rome of Steve Pieczenik, "crisis manager" from the State Department in Washington.

In the final pages of *Days of Wrath*, Katz makes his own position clear. There was no need to let Moro die. "The hard line, as it was practised in Rome, is the wrong line, the line of escalation, the blood line." Katz condemns the un-negotiating stand in general because there is no real evidence that political kidnappers hold their hand if they know their demands will not be met. And he condemns it in particular in the case of Moro where, he says, he was convinced by his contacts in the Red Brigades that Moro would have been released unharmed in exchange for an imprisoned member of the Brigades who was sick, or for "some kind of political recognition" that they were "armed revolutionaries and not common criminals."

For all the interest of his story it is difficult to agree with Robert Katz's assumptions. Would the Red Brigades ever in fact have released Moro? Was the kind of political recognition they had in mind not too high a price to pay? Can the dreadful uncertainties and confusions that ensnare political leaders faced with a decision of this kind really be so neatly labelled as a "one-dimensional reaction"? Robert Katz, excellent as a narrator, makes the politics a little easy.

Truth and consequences

ALEKSANDR I. SOLZHENITSYN:
The Oak and the Calf
Translated by Harry Willetts
568pp. Collins/Harvill. £8.95.
0 00 262603 9

The Oak and the Calf is the English translation of Solzhenitsyn's *Bodalsya Telenok s Dubom*. Written in five instalments over the period 1967-74, it is a book of literary memoirs—with a difference. Solzhenitsyn writes "by way of explanation" that he has always liked reading "literature on literature, literature apropos of literature, literature begotten by literature" (though he rates such "secondary literature . . . considerably lower than works of primary literature").

John B. Dunlop in his *TLS* review (April 11, 1975) of the Russian edition pointed out that "these literary memoirs lack much of what one might expect from the genre. There is little discussion of strictly 'literary' problems. . . . The contemporary literary scene in the Soviet Union and the West is passed over virtually in silence. . . . Instead, the focus is chiefly on the immense difficulties involved in publishing even *some* of the 'truth' in the Soviet Union and on the skills needed to survive as an underground Russian writer."

The literal translation of *Bodalsya Telenok s Dubom* is "the calf butted the oak": Solzhenitsyn regards himself as the calf, and the oak as the Soviet totalitarian system. "The calf turned out to be no weaker than the oak" was the conclusion he came to on the plane taking him to freedom in the West. What prompted him to "butt" the Soviet regime was the KGB's seizure of his papers in 1965. His public opposition could not damn him more completely than his seized papers, so he spoke out openly, making speeches, provoking arguments. *The Oak and the Calf* ends with Solzhenitsyn acknowledging his great debt to his wife for smuggling his enormous archive out of the Soviet Union.

A. H.

The divine right of the executive

By Vernon Bogdanor

MAX BELOFF and GILLIAN PEELE:
The Government of the United Kingdom
Political Authority in a Changing Society
438pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £12.50 (paperback, £6.95).
0 297 77589 8

Of the general works on British government written over the past fifteen years, two books stand out by reason of the originality of their approach and the reliability of their judgments. They are Samuel Beer's *Modern British Politics* and Richard Rose's *Politics in England*, both of which were first published in 1965, and have been regularly revised since. Beer and Rose are both Americans, and their affection for this country is allied to an awareness of the fragility of that curious dispensation which gave to Britain a system of government both representative and strong. Yet in other respects their approaches are entirely different; for while Beer attempts to explain British politics in ideological terms, Rose adapts for his own use the tools of modern political sociology.

The Government of the United Kingdom complements these two works by analysing British government in more traditional fashion: for its basic unit of analysis is the political institution, rather than the sociological abstraction or the doctrinal construct. It is the kind of book which Bryce or Lowell might have written eighty years ago, but none the worse for that. Its high standard of accuracy and reliability together with a style mercifully free of jargon or pretentiousness will ensure that it is used for a long time to come by students of British government. But *The Government of the United Kingdom* also offers a critique of the working of British institutions which, if it cannot be fully accepted, does nevertheless succeed in casting much light on the way in which we are governed.

To present such a critique at the present time must seem a somewhat quixotic venture; rather like attempting to capture a continually changing landscape through a single snapshot. For the distinctive feature of the approach chosen by Beloff and Peele is to stress those legal and constitutional features which in their view form the background to the practical working of institutions. Yet, as the authors acknowledge, these basic features are themselves changing; indeed there is good reason to believe that the United Kingdom "is witnessing a period of constitutional transition in which the balance of the constitution is shifting and new institutional patterns are emerging"; indeed it is the reappearance of fundamental constitutional issues in British politics which makes the system of government so peculiarly difficult to describe and evaluate.

Issues such as the nature of the electoral system, the role of the House of Lords, and the character of the United Kingdom as a unitary state, all seemed to have been firmly resolved within a few years of the end of the First World War: but developments of the past few years have called into question the constitutional settlement of the first two decades of the century, and it may be that we are again entering a period of constitutional change analogous to that which began with the Second Reform Bill in 1867. Indeed the reintroduction of constitutional issues on to the Agenda of British politics may indicate that it is the very shape of British democracy which is in question just as it was in the period between Gladstone and Lloyd George.

It is of course far too early to chart the direction in which the current debate will lead us. For even if the Whig dogs manage to get the better of the argument, there is, as Bagehot well knew, an inert weight attached to long-established institutions which frequently ensures their survival long after they have been rendered bereft of doctrinal support.

Yet Beloff and Peele hope and believe that current developments will lead to a clearer appreciation of the value of a structure of government subject to precise legal restraints, and one in which the judges are able to counterbalance the presumptions of elected politicians and officials. Like Lord Hailsham in *The Dilemma of Democracy*, Lord Scarman in his Hamlyn Lectures, *English Law: The New Dimension*, and Nevil Johnson in *In Search of the Constitution*, Beloff and Peele look to the law to save us from tyrannical government. In their view, the growth of the executive has been assisted not only by altered conceptions of the role of the state, but also by the doctrine, or rather lack of doctrine, governing the dealings of the executive. For

> the British executive has inherited powers and a degree of autonomy which reflect the fact that the origins of the British state are monarchical rather than republican and that in consequence some of the features of royal absolutism have been retained in the constitutional arrangements of a mass democracy.

Beloff and Peele echo a long line of conservative sceptics—or perhaps pessimists would be a more appropriate description. "With us", Lord Salisbury told his nephew, A. J. Balfour, "the feebleness of our government is our security—the only one we have—against revolutionary alterations of our laws".

If that is indeed a correct description of our condition—and one can find, even within the corpus of British conservative thought, alternative and more cheerful accounts—it is doubtful if any form of new constitutional settlement can do much to alleviate it. One need only study the history of the American Supreme Court with its vagaries of interpretation and subjective jurisprudence to appreciate that lawyers and judges may not be entirely reliable as bulwarks against government. That the Supreme Court follows the election returns is no doubt a gross exaggeration, but there is a sufficient element of truth in it to worry the constitutionalist: and even if one discounts many of the revelations of Woodward and Armstrong in *The Brethren* as products of an over-lurid imagination, it remains difficult to feel much confidence in the ability of judges to transcend those human failings which so afflict politicians.

In their critique of British government, therefore, Beloff and Peele place too much weight upon the remedial potential of the law. It is rather in the political kingdom that change is most likely to occur. If devolution had proved acceptable, this would, as Beloff and Peele recognize, have so altered the pattern of political authority from that of recent years "as to justify the assertion that in essence one would be dealing with a new constitutional structure, whose full implications could not easily be estimated". It is precisely because the Scotland and Wales Acts were so manifestly incapable of providing stable political solutions to the problems which they were designed to solve that they would have been the prelude to further changes; and changes perhaps of a beneficial kind.

With devolution in limbo, attention has shifted for the moment to the reform of the House of Lords, while advocates of electoral reform and a greater use of the referendum (S. E. Finer's recent *The Changing British Party System, 1945-1979* is an elegant statement of the case) wait in the wings. Such reforms are bound to strike at the prerogative of the political parties, since it is their monopoly of power and patronage which is under threat.

For if our political structure has atrophied, this is less the result of the inadequacy of traditional constitutional doctrines than of the current role of the political parties, the only element in the governmental firmament which has succeeded in escaping critical scrutiny in recent years. Beloff and Peele are charitable towards the judges and too kind to the political parties; it is from discontent with the nostrums of party government that change is most likely to occur, rather than in the directions indicated in *The Government of the United Kingdom*.

Yet, whether or not one accepts the central thread of argument in the book, it would be wrong to end on a critical note. Beloff and Peele have provided something far broader than the conventional textbook approach which used to be so distressingly prevalent in works on British government. They have offered an interpretation of British government which will stimulate the devotee as it will enlighten the beginner.

A second edition of *A Constitutional and Legal History of Medieval England*, by Bryce Lyon, has recently been published (687pp. W. W. Norton & Company. £9.50. 0 393 95132 4). First published in 1960, the book covers the period from about 450 to 1485. The new edition incorporates the results of the last two decades of medieval scholarship and includes completely new bibliographies for each section, as well as a new discussion of the period from 1399 to 1485 which takes into account the latest interpretations of Lancastrian and Yorkist history.

Pairing off in darkest Swansea

By Janet Morgan

DIANA LEONARD:
Sex and Generation
A Study of Courtship and Weddings
315pp. Tavistock. £12.50.
0 422 77170 8

This is Swansea. Twelve years ago, when Diana Leonard began her study, its manners were generally prudish. While London was swinging, at Swansea "no sex education was permitted in schools, there was a lack of family planning facilities in the town, the home for unmarried mothers was run on Spartan lines [the babies were not, however, exposed] and there was a general reticence about sex in polite conversation." When the film of *Women* was shown in nearby Llanelli, in 1970, it was delivered to the cinema by Securicar van. Families were close and tight: children tended to remain at home until marriage, practising complicated financial arrangements with their parents, "paying in", living "on board", negotiating "lodge money". Women knew their place, doing most of the housework, with little help from the children: "My mother's a 'total woman' whether you like that or not. She's never asked us to do so much as make our own beds and she never will." How far this is from the various models of total women proposed by, for instance, Shirley Conran, Erica Jong and Marilyn French, for whom "making a bed" means something else entirely (like spearing up a duvet).

Now here is Mrs Leonard, at that time a young married woman living in Swansea, these days a lecturer in the Sociology of Education at the University of London. Self-effacing though she is, in 300 pages we can arrive at some notion of her character. For a start, she is persistent, battling for months with the General Register Office for records of past marriages, systematically interrogating ministers and priests of all persuasions (Anglican, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Congregationalist, Methodist, Presbyterian, and, later, Spiritualist, Pentecostalist, and Jewish, together with Plymouth Brethren, Jehovah's Witnesses and members of other sects), in return for listening to their conversation until late into the night. She is thorough—"I went in the marriage proposition classes held in St Mary's"—and meticulous, even establishing the identity of the elderly man who, officiously or unofficially, acts as usher at the Swansea Registry Office, "telling them why things are running late, how many weddings there have been before that morning, and a bit about what they have to do." Future candidates for an appearance in the Registry's Marriage Room (city and light, with a carpeted floor, a dozen white leatherette chairs and two vases of flowers supplied twice-weekly by the Parks and Gardens Department) will be glad to know that this commonplace foliage is attached to the Guildhall as a night watchman, and had been a trick cyclist at the Old Empire Music Hall. "Some", we are advised helpfully, "give him a tip, others a cigarette, for having put them at their ease".

In some respects unsuitable (she wears a miniskirt when pregnant), the author nonetheless knows when discretion is called for. "While people in other situations may use an unknown interviewer authoritatively or to gossip about sexual matters, especially if they are assured of total anonymity, those about to get married, in Swansea, being interviewed by name in their own home, clearly regard information on their sexual behaviour as private and somewhat embarrassing as a topic of conversation." Undaunted, however, Mrs Leonard succeeds in acquiring a good deal of delicate material, "proffered in gloomy dining rooms and chats, sometimes lasting several hours, after the formal schedule had been completed and when the interviewer had satisfied her curiosity about me and was prepared to exchange information. And of course", she adds, deftly, "I heard tales from my neighbours . . ."

Oh, the significance of that last remark! In her four years in Swansea (the first on a "new, barren, rented-housing estate in Killay" and the next there in "a small, owner-occupied terraced house in Llanelli"), Mrs Leonard must have been taken into the confidence of about a quarter of the town's population, as well as into their living rooms (in her interviews, their living-rooms for ten jewellers, photographers' and dressmakers' shops, the offices of local newspapers, bakeries, caterers, cut-hire firms, estate agents and, mysteriously, the probation office).

She was invited to "hen" parties, to wedding ceremonies, to egg hide and groom into the vestry or off on their honeymoon, and to wedding receptions by the score ("when I might be introduced as 'any single lady'"). Though an outsider in Swansea, betrayed by her accent, "not to say my eccentric behaviour", unsuspiciously, Mrs Leonard was stunningly successful in winning the trust and revelations of her subjects. And, lamentably for us, confirming, respectably courtship and marriage rituals of Swansea, where a world we have all uncovered—of propitiation and exorcism, horrid tricks and terrible ordeals, proverbs and portents.

She describes, for example, the ghastly morality which inevitably seizes a bride and groom's friends and relations during the events of this "major ceremonial cycle". At work, at a tearful "hen" parties (where one prospective bride finds herself dancing on the table, singing the Welsh National Anthem, "mildly obscene"), signs are attached to a girl's clothes, she is presented with "baby's potties or penis-shaped carrots", and red decorated through the streets. Men fare no better: "According to the boys, he drank a whole bottle of Scotch and still went to work (as a driver) at 7 am the following day. On the way home he took his trousers off—and they took him into a restaurant—the Anglo Asian—with no trousers on!"

Such "tomfoolerous joking", as Mrs Leonard calls it, continues unremittingly. While bride and groom are forced to listen to speeches full of "sentimentality, facetiousness and sexual innuendo" and to read about extraordinary riddles and bits of doggerel described as "notelets" (the least offensive example runs: "An apple a day / keeps the doctor away / But what can a pair / do at night"), the bride's mother may be sewing up her daughter's nightdress and removing her new son-in-law's pyjama trousers from the luggage. If the couple hope to leave the reception by car, the vehicle will be covered in Bowlicked messages and festooned with boots, tin cans and kippers; if, like the majority of Mrs Leonard's sample, they leave on the mid-afternoon train for London, they will find the windows coated with messages ("Sunny's Groton—route in for unlimited pleasure") and the luggage-racks removed with lavatory paper. After such "roughjoking with confetti", bride and groom may find at their destination no single bed, at best, and, at worst, a telegram saying, "All is forgiven. Come home and get married."

Growing old in grimmest Marlsden

By Ronald Blythe

HAIM HAZAN:
The Limbo People
A Study of the Constitution of the Time University among the Aged
199pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £10.50.
0 7100 0481 8

MAGNUS PYKE:
Long Life
Expectations of Old Age
166pp. Dent. £6.95. (paperback, £3.95).
0 460 04461 8

Haim Hazan's somewhat grandly titled look at what is happening at an old people's day centre in the East End of London is one of the most intriguing journeys yet into the ever-surprising territory of the aged. Dr Hazan admits that he had travelled quite a distance with his research until this particular lie of the land came into view, or rather struck him like a revelation. This interesting book is the ideas which he has built up around the revelation. It offers a concept of ageing which would fire a playwright, or a good novelist, and this is a compliment. The concern, empirically arrived at, are ie understand, is that the members of this day centre have become preoccupied to the exclusion of all else with the management of time. (If course, most old people manage time to some extent, paying it out for the long decades when it managed them; but often because there often comes a moment in great age when one seems to get the hang of time. But ie see it, as Dr Hazan says he has, being collectively manipulated to suit the wishes of the members of a Jewish working-class social club is a curious sight. Even in their styling of themselves as the participants of the centre, these old folk appear to have made themselves eccentically unattachable and exclusive.

Each day they leave their poor little homes in the Borough of Marlsden for their haven or sanctuary where they tell time what it can, brisk to "them" by—say—of recollection or speculation. And if staff or visitors let in mentions or hopes (or dreads) which are taboo to the participants, they are immediately told to shut up. The Jewish Welfare Board opened the centre in 1970 and ie it have drifted the previously neglected, abandoned, hidden people who have suddenly come into their own.

A powerful little fragment of contemporary London life emerges. For the Gentile reader, a lot of what he has taken for granted concerning a close-knit family basis of Jewish society is grimly challenged. Thirty per cent of these old parents have been deserted by their children and none of them practise their religion. The only connection with the synagogue is to die with burial fees. Until the centre opened, they were assisted by such things as kosher meals on wheels but apart from this they lived as though they were dead to the neighbourhood. New they behave as though the neighbourhood and all that it represented to them since birth is dead to them, blaming their mothers for the way they were brought up, fate for making their work "a compelling, unpleasant, tedious, necessary evil" and their circumstances unfeelingly for being not worth discussing. New, strangely, everything that is behind them and everything that is before them is either unmentionably or disconnected. It is the present which matters and they take liberties with both the past and the future to keep it that way. The only old dream which they let run on is the one about going to Israel. One day.

Like many such refuges, the centre has attracted to itself a number of individuals who are not old at all but who suffer all the difficulties of the aged more than anyone else, says Dr Hazan. It is best described as an assemblage of people afflicted by various illnesses. Once securely accepted there, their tendency is to turn their back on, as even diamantle the rickety frame, work which previously supported them and lean heavily on the new resources. "An avalanche of assistance is demanded of the Centre once the old person has been initiated into what his rights are" and this is accomplished by "a gradual independence of the outside world". Realistic fears about the next step, the old people's home, broken life day, the participants become angry and indignant when anyone attempts to lovelike them into other reality or culture. "The rivalries of the past combine two complementary elements: the creation of a continuum, selected, collective past experience, closely related to the centre, and the elimination of all other dividing, unequal and irrelevant factors. This common ground is defended by invalidating other realities which might supersede the Centre. All these are merely prerequisites . . . to a new content of time." These Bingo-playing, baking, formidable old numbers who have brushed yesterday and death refer to the family photographs in their handbags as their "paper-children". Dr Hazan found them collected in change-proof room as they respond to "a whole gamut of existential incompatibles and ambiguities which are commonly considered unavoidable and inexorable".

The book is intriguing and uncomfortable, chipping away as it does at a lot of things ie do with old age which we like to think of as beyond re-fashioning. Instead of the traditional rigidity, "old people are in the course of a most dynamic and unknown phase of life". Dr Hazan writes well and orderly. But between the coolness of his objectivity and the frenzy mowers he has alighted from his subjects, there is something about this circumstance which is very chilling indeed.

Not so Magnus Pyke who, being seventy-two, is beyond objectivity. His review of present-day old-age thinking and practice, as it were, is made up of humane analysis of gerontics, economics and ethics, and is informed by a deep-felt and ancient form of kindliness which somehow does not manage ie get itself ieie the current literature of "concern". He gives all the necessary statistics and most of the facts, some of them very nasty, though many surprisingly nice, and blends all together with his own cheerful brand of philosophy. For those who think that reality has ie be a grey matter ie bin some celeurful truths, he is buoyant, even bouncy, but never false. The opinions also briskly and unreservedly, giving the old ones themselves something new to consider and the rest of us pause for thought. With what affluenza did we once reward those who were passing through this entirely natural stage of existence? What on earth are we giving them now?

Fourteen per cent of the population is over 60 and six per cent over 75. Whatever the official view, this is neither a good thing nor a bad thing, but simply a different division of the living in way we have known previously. Having been adequately fed and hygienically cared for during the latter half of their lives ie least, the great majority of these aged people are tough and capable. The most potentially disastrous element in the present debate on them, says Dr Pyke, is pension budgeting. The money required is already colossal and is politically irreducible. So how about raising the retirement age for men? Is there a heart attack just after mailing it? Does any action persist beyond mydeath? What is the "identity" of my sending the review to *TLS*? Is it the same action as my dropping the review into the mailbox? As my opening of my fingers?

The example illustrates a cluster of problems that occupy action-theorists, problems ie which Jennifer Hornsby's book is devoted. The book draws heavily on existing literature, but Hornsby takes a distinctive position on the nature of actions, and advances some new arguments and considerations.

One long-standing issue in action theory is the relation between actions and bodily movements, an issue sparked by Wittgenstein's famous question, "What is left over when I subtract the fact that my arm goes up from the fact that I cause my arm?" Hornsby notes a grammatical ambiguity in the phrase "bodily movement". The verb "move" occurs transitively in "My move my arm", but intransitively in "My arm moves", just as "grow" occurs transitively in "Mr Brown grows lettuce in his garden", but intransitively in "Lettuce grows in Mr Brown's garden". We may thus distinguish bodily movements—transitive bodily movements—from bodily movements—intransitive bodily movements. Hornsby maintains, as the most theorists, that actions cannot be identified with bodily movements. A person's movements may be no "right fit" between the vocabulary of neurophysiology and the vocabulary of "trying". I am not disturbed by the suggestion that trying have no precise neurophysiological locus, but is it plausible that the locus of actions should be fuzzy in this same sort of way?

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Hornsby takes her cue from a well-known approach to action-descriptions. Suppose that I move my finger, thereby causing a switch to flip, a light to go on, and a prowler to be alerted. Are the action-descriptions "my flipping of the switch", "my turning on of the light" and "my alerting of the prowler" descriptions of a bodily movement? That is not obvious. But on Hornsby's view borrowed from the work of G. E. M. Anscombe and Donald Davidson, these are descriptions of a bodily movement, my moving of the finger. None of the three descriptions gives an intrinsic characterization of the action; each describes it relationally. Where exactly are they located? When is their temporal extent? Which ones are the same and which are different? Consider, for example, my sending this review ie *TLS*. Is the relevant location of that action the immediate neighbourhood of the mailbox where I drop the envelope? Or does its temporal location include the entire route traversed across the Atlantic and on to the editorial desk? Whao exactly is the action performed? Does it terminate when I let go of the envelope? Or does the action continue until the envelope is received and opened? (What if I die of heart attack just after mailing it? Does my action persist beyond my death?) What is the "identity" of my sending the review ie *TLS*? Is it the same action as my dropping the review into the mailbox? As my opening of my fingers?

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Hornsby is also too hasty in dismissing the theory that actions are identical with bodily movements *alone*. Of course, not every bodily movement is an action; that much is acknowledged by all parties. But a rival position might hold that every bodily movement (appropriately caused by a volition is an action. On this possible view, a volition or trying isn't even *part* of an action. When we describe a bodily movement as an action we describe it in terms of its interior causes, i.e. volitions or tryings; but these interior causes aren't part of the action. Such a position should be attractive to a Davidsonian like Hornsby who thinks that we often describe events in terms of other events. Just as a light's going on needn't be part of a turning on of the light, though that result makes the action a turning on of the light, so a volition or trying needn't be part of a hand-raising though these causes *make* the event of hand-raising as opposed to a mere rising of the hand.

The arguments for Hornsby's own position, then, are hardly decisive. Still, the book is valuable for its relevant and sometimes subtle comments on a wide range of topics in action theory. There are occasional lapses or inaccuracies. For example, in criticising this reviewer's position on actions, Hornsby mistakenly claims that no allowance is made for "further description" or "more detailed information" about a given action (p. 19). "To the contrary, my view does permit additional descriptions or properties to be ascribed to an action, especially causal properties; the view just implies that any such additional property has an associated action that is distinct from the original one. Despite such occasional lapses, Hornsby's book is generally careful, and conducive to clarity of thinking about action theory. It is a welcome addition to the literature.

The self and the senses

By J. J. C. Smart

G. F. MACDONALD (Editor):
Perception and Identity
Essays Presented to A. J. Ayer with his Replies to them
358pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 27182 3

Graham Macdonald has done a useful job in editing this collection of essays in honour of Sir Alfred Ayer. A noteworthy feature of the volume is Ayer's longish reply to them. As its title partly indicates, many of the essays are concerned with problems of perception and of personal identity. (The latter problems arise out of worries about personhood, not identity, which is really quite a transparent notion.) Only in the final two papers, by Bernard Williams and Stephan Körner, is there much about the verification principle. Williams argues that though logical positivism thought of itself as a "scientific" philosophy, the verification principle prevented it from accommodating a scientific world view. Körner has some rather non-Kantian criticisms of Ayer's conceptions of metaphysics.

As is to be expected, Ayer's replies to the essays are an example of lucid and readable philosophical prose. Some of the contributors to this volume fall very far short of Ayer in this respect. The most awkward prose writer here is David Wiggins. Now Wiggins is quite an eminent philosopher and it is a pity that he puts up needless obstacles between himself and his readers. He is arguing for a form of *de re* essentialism, albeit a relatively modest one. That the turgidity of his prose is not due to the difficulties inherent in the subject-matter is shewn by the extreme lucidity of Ayer's reply. That reply is very convincing, though some philosophers would want to go further and also reject the *de dicto* essentialism implicit in Ayer's acceptance of the analytic-synthetic distinction.

Another contributor whose prose is not easy to read is Michael Dummett. One of the difficulties in reading Dummett comes from the fact that his sentences are often very long, with many qualifications; another from the fact that Dummett's very clever mind often leads him to dart up side alleys, so that the main thrust of his thought becomes hard to follow.

In a greater or lesser degree this tendency to prolixity and over-qualification is quite common among Oxford philosophers. One feels that some of them are worried that their subtle colleagues will think them "naive", so that they are concerned to think every possible objection in advance. Two of the best written pieces in the

Trying inwardly and moving outwardly

By Alvin Goldman

JENNIFER HORNSBY:
Actions
152pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £7.50 (paperback, £3.95).
0 7100 0451 6

Events and actions are salient parts of the world, at least as represented in everyday thought and speech. Earthquakes and assassinations, accelerations and exhortations, proceedings and proceedings, are all denizens of our commonsense ontology. Numerous difficulties arise, however, in trying to pinpoint the properties of events and actions. Where exactly are they located? When is their temporal extent? Which ones are the same and which are different? Consider, for example, my sending this review ie *TLS*. Is the relevant location of that action the immediate neighbourhood of the mailbox where I drop the envelope? Or does its temporal location include the entire route traversed across the Atlantic and on to the editorial desk? Whao exactly is the action performed? Does it terminate when I let go of the envelope? Or does the action continue until the envelope is received and opened? (What if I die of heart attack just after mailing it? Does my action persist beyond my death?) What is the "identity" of my sending the review ie *TLS*? Is it the same action as my dropping the review into the mailbox? As my opening of my fingers?

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commentary

Interpretations in the Midlands

By Robert L. Patten

Fireworks on the lawn at Leicester celebrating an American revolution to which, so far as the capacity audience could recall, Marian Evans never made reference, punctuated the first session of the Victorian Studies Centre George Eliot Centenary Conference (July 4-6). Apart from that inconsequent and pyrotechnic note, the activities remained grave enough to do justice to F. W. H. Myers's sibylline prophetess. There was also plenty of "fellow feeling", as member of the George Eliot Fellowship and academics from around the world dutifully followed Mrs Kathleen Adams across the "Midlands" to Arbury Hall (Chevereel Manor in *Scenes of Clerical Life*), passing not only such familiar settings as the "Red Deeps" but also the Daniel Deronda Day Care Centre, fortuitously located on the site of the workhouse in "Amos Barton". (Who dares question mere fictional coincidence?)

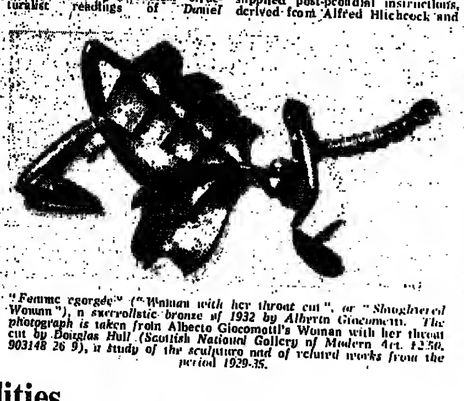
Nor was appreciation of the novelist's humour lacking. Despite Eliza Lynn Linton's spitefully perceptive portrait of the great possum, George Eliot did sympathize with those more or less imperfect mid-lands neighbours of her early life, in her "A Meliorist Midnight Matinée", theatrically timed to conclude at the stroke of twelve, Philip Collins (Leicester) and Isobel Armstrong (Southampton) vitalized Mr Brooke's distracted avuncularities and the Dodson sisters' covenant inspection of Mrs Fuller's new full crown bonnet. The West End theatre might survive, VAT and all, if Professor Collins would consent to a one-man reading of the wit and wisdom of Bessy Tulliver.

The core of the conference, however, was a series of seven lectures, all of gratifyingly high quality. Barbara Hardy (London) opened Friday night by emphasizing Eliot's sense of the novel as an effective medium. Through resonant extracts she illustrated Eliot's method of discriminating emotional participations out of dimness and vagueness, rather in the spirit of Philip Wakem's tribute to Maggie: "You have raised a dim impress into a vivid consciousness . . . this gift of transferred life which has come to me in loving you, may be a new power to me."

Saturday's papers, more adamantly intellectual, produced unrest, even "anxiety", as David Carroll put it, "in the minds of unreconstructed realists"—and, he might have added, unreconstructed idealists as well. George Levine (Rutgers) implicitly challenged radical structuralist readings of *Daniel Deronda*—the conference's favourite text—but he did so by asserting that George Eliot strove in that memorating George Eliot in Westminster Abbey on the grounds of her life and fiction were relevant to opposition to Christian teaching) seem plausible.

Sunday brought no calm, David Lodge (Birmingham), using the narratorial commentary in *Middlemarch* to shift scrutiny from Isabel Armstrong focused "heavily" in Eliot's thinking and in *The Spanish Gypsy* and John Beer asserted, Eliot worked on the conditions of a shift from artist to cultural transmitter, to artist as cultural creator. Thus Rosemary Ashton seemed "appropriate" for her Knoepflmacher (Princeton) analyzed an ingenious, wide-ranging speculation on the personal and artistic affinities between Eliot, Shelley, her spouse and her family and Mary Anne Evans, her family and her fictions.

The intellectual SF-Cuisinart whirls dazzled and illuminated though for the academic cognoscenti rather obscured the Midland landscape and characters were there to distinguish. George Eliot's (The Fellowship may not wish to give up her cultured ventriloquist. What did get stressed was her exceptional vitality and courage: her last works, and the novelties and discontinuities with previous beliefs. The transfer of Gospel imperatives into aesthetics proved to be Eliot's. George Eliot (and for Hardy) problematic as other forms of Christ's transformation. The startlingly illuminative in fact but one so often recalled Mikhail Bakhtin's carnivalesque in Marian Evans emerged from the challenging conference, perhaps as a consoling auditor of the lectures' whisperings, but an even more exuberant and uncompromising one.



"Femme egorgée" ("Woman with her throat cut", or "Slaughtered Woman"), a sweetrollistic bronze of 1932 by Alberto Giacometti. The photograph is taken from Alberto Giacometti's Woman with her throat cut by Douglas Hull (Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. £2.50. 903148 26 9), a study of the sculpture and of related works from the period 1929-35.

Deceptive banalities

By Philip Brady

Tom Fool
Half Moon Theatre

The stage-set for Franz Xaver Kroetz's *Tom Fool* takes up half of the Half Moon. It displays six rooms, five of which are in carousselly workers' flat. There are real taps in bathroom and kitchen, a real glider-model kite in the bedroom, the drawers in the lounge are really full and the kitchen is fully operational. On this stage are three people who do not so much live together as coexist: the mother, Martha, hawk-eyed, in her war against specks of dust; the father, Otto, tired, obsessive, defeated, given to dreaming (via the symbol-kite, old-hat—the model glider), prone to outbursts of impotent assertiveness; the son, Ludwig, quiet, gauche, unemployed and a reluctant rebel. To the father the son is a shiftless layabout (his very presence a constant irritant) and the mother a domestic object and captive audience. The mixture is explosive and the explosion drives son and mother out into the world, leaving father lonely, desperate and incorrigible, amid the unwashed pots.

Put like this *Tom Fool* sounds familiar—a sort of German Bill Naughton without the wry laughter and the nostalgia. Its origins, however, are more exotic. Franz Xaver Kroetz is an active communist and a Bavarian, a rare combination in itself—a rough-and-ready equivalent might be a Thatcherite in Ebbw Vale. He has won many prizes, he has written over thirty plays, he has during one season (1972-73) been Germany's most frequently produced playwright and yet he has remained curiously distant—a well-known name that, somehow, few venture with.

In one sense the facts could be misleading—communism has not shaped *Tom Fool*. There is talk of redundance, and hints of a history of declining takeings, there is—in an uncongenially literal mode—a hunkered gods and warriors wearing jacking up broken bits since Otto has erupted in a destructive, equally wordless frenzy: Martha slowly, almost wordlessly, deciding to leave; Ludwig tremblingly silent under his father's taunts.

The structure of Kroetz's play, in which timelessness creates its own climaxes and characters fall in clear verbally in the certain, cruelly capricious scenes, forcing them to create and sustain characters who are not even physically eloquent. The Half Moon's cast survive the almost cinematic close-ups and hold with great skill and attention to detail. Michael Pocker making particularly convincing sense of Ludwig, a youth whose frustrations bring him time and again near to tears while his dignity keeps him dry-eyed.

But not all the elements in the production focus attentively on the minutiae as do the three actors. The set, although impressively detailed, is not securely located in how they should always be seen as motion, instead of being placed spiritless against the walls of a gallery or museum.

Most are face-masks, and they are reminiscent—with their square heads, wrinkled brows and long protruding tongues—of the popular masks found today in Bragança, spiritless Portugal and across the frontier into Spain. On the other hand, the helmet masks used at Azteca and Tenochtitli dances are clearly directly descended from the helmets of the old Aztec Eagle Knights. In many cases the appearance of horns may be a Christian reinterpretation of the snake, with its sexual, fertility and reincarnation symbolism, as a representation of the devil. But clearly indigenous are the jaguars, armadillos and marmalds worn about the waist like hobby-horses.

This exhibition serves as an excellent introduction to a neglected tradition which is rendly lacking for artists, only to be replaced by a developing industry in meaningless imitations for an international tourist trade.

Images of the mask

By J. B. Donne

Ritual Dance Masks from Mexico
Edward Totah Gallery, Covent Garden

When Hernán Cortés and his men entered the Valley of Mexico in 1519, they encountered a civilization which, besides its monumental architecture, its astonishingly developed arts and technology, and a hieroglyphic system of recording events, had a variety of flourishing masking traditions. Priests wore masks representing the deities they served, masked dancers performed fertility rites, carved stone masks were placed on the faces of the dead at burial, there are clay figurines with removable masks, and even some terracottas portraying animals with human face-masks attached to their heads. Surprisingly, the Spaniards paid scant attention to this aspect of Mesoamerican culture otherwise so fully described in their chronicles and codices, though masked gods and warriors wearing eagle helmets are mentioned and illustrated. Perhaps the reason is that in Spain itself masks were either being adapted to and adopted by the Church to reappear at the pre-Lenten carnival or as representations of the devil, or else they were periodically proscribed. Even after the Civil War, carnival itself was suppressed in many cities. And in Mexico, since the time of the conquistadores, the pre-Conquest masking traditions have been subject to similar influences, adaptations and disapproval from the Church.

It is against this background that one has to see the exhibition of ritual dance masks from Mexico which Michael Kelly, and Michael Calderwood, have mounted at the Edward Totah Gallery (until July 26). Some fifty nineteenth and twentieth-century masks recently collected in Central Mexico reveal a variety of styles and forms. They are accompanied by a selection of colour photographs of masks being worked, with their associated costumes and trimmings of false hair, feathers and streamers. This is how the spectrum of English aesthetics runs, let alone foreign languages, if it sensibly avoids the dialect, loses colour because it lacks local roots. The play is taking place in a limbo, an English-speaking Mondrik, where Luxembourg is strongly pronounced and where there is German limited beer in English washing-up liquid. Kroetz seems to be aiming to bring his audience to a sense of individual predicaments through what appears—but only at first sight—to be total immersion in banal detail. But detail matters—it has to ring true and he internally consistent. And it does not travel easily. The result is that an English audience, lacking hearings, may decide that the means are serving banal ends. They would do less than justice to the way in which three observant actors and their producer, Nancy Illing, in responding to Kroetz's cinematic vision, reveal his essentially unbanal ends.

commentary

The gentlest of princes

By T. P. Matheson

Hamlet
Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford

There must be many avid Shakespeareans who have never seen a *Hamlet* in the main house at Stratford. It is ten years since Alan Howard patrolled its steeply raked stage. John Barton's new production must exercise not only the spirits of its distinguished Stratford predecessors (especially, perhaps, the Peter Hall-David Warner long-starved student of 1965). But, the more recent visitations to Elsinore of Derek Jacobi, Stephen Rechoff and Jonathan Pryce. Patience and preparation, though, are richly rewarded: this *Hamlet* offers the most intelligent and sensitive respecting of the text for a very long time, although in its frequent allusions to the accretions of stage tradition, it risks oversubtlety.

We are in the theatre and not allowed to forget it. Ralph Koltai's permanent open set has a forestage occupied by a bare, raised, wooden platform; in the gloomy recesses behind it stands a half-revealed assembly of heavily shrouded properties: a huge, wicker, costume-basket; a tarnished wooden throne; a clutch of foils and pikes; a pile of books; goblets and chalice; a blanketed armoured figure. These emblems of theatrical illusion are visible throughout the performance. We are not to be transported to Elsinore, to the court and the graveyard; we remain instead in the world of impersonation. The implication of taking the dust-covers (both theatrical and intellectual) off a familiar but unknown play is clearly deliberate. Claudius and Polonius eavesdrop behind the blanket which half-covers the armour-clad, abandoned old Ghost; that same blanket hectores the actors behind which Polonius is stabbed; at the end, the corpse of the Prince is not borne aloft from the stage but laid reverently in its centre, to be covered by yet another blanket.

The imagery here has a precise source: the "rugged Pyrrhus" speech. The general dominance of theatrical metaphor, together with the muted, unglamorous costumes, dispels naturalistic illusion. This limits as well as enriches the performance. *Hamlet* is concerned not only to reveal the ways in which dramatism and role-playing infect all our behaviour, but equally to exploit the logical contrast between the demonstrably active world of the Players and the therefore presumably authentic world of Hamlet and the court. Part of the point of introducing the whole apparatus of theatre into the plot is to convince us by a trick of the veracity of Hamlet's experience by comparison with the fallacies of poetic fiction. By emphasizing the affinity rather than the difference between art and life, some of the Russian aimed at in the play is sacrificed.

Paradoxically, conventional theatricality is almost entirely missing from this disciplined and cerebral re-creation. There is none of the gimmickry of transferring the Ghost's lines into Hamlet's speeches, although the untasteful innovation of letting Gertrude as well as Hamlet see the Ghost in the closet-scene is permitted. The detail of the play is full of new insight and invention, but it operates through a reconsideration of the text and not by the imposition of distracting spectacle and irrelevant sensation.

The decorum of the staging is matched by the playing. This *Hamlet* is not swamped by the passionate flamboyance of an adolescent or neurotic Prince, using the rest of the company as foils for his erratic commentary. Michael Pennington's anguish and disgust seem almost too reasonable, his distraction embarrassing above all to himself, produced not by some inner defect of temperament but by his reluctant association with the corruption of his society. He is a gentle Hamlet, considerate not only to Ophelia and his mother, but to Polonius and even his school-fellow spies. The edge of cruelty in his exchanges is missing, but the reading makes complete sense of Ophelia's grief-stricken lament for the overthrow of such a "noble mind" and his eventual explosions are all the more shocking because in such patent violation of his nature. He is without any self-generating pre-psychopathic frenzy, but remains depressively withdrawn, seeking to maintain his own humanity in impossible circumstances.

As a model of temperate acting it obeys the injunctions given by the play itself, and Hamlet's refusal to overstep the modesty of nature is shared by all the principal players—even down to the First Player, notably a notorious sawyer-of-the-air, who delivers the "rugged Pyrrhus" speech with mild and understated gesture, only discreetly working up the inevitable rhetorical momentum. Curiously, the revaluation of Hamlet's character and lines does not have the effect of blackening the villains of the piece. The humane rationale, the scrupulous attention to the language, confers upon both Gertrude and Claudius an unusual degree of self-knowledge.

The consequence of such a discursive style is enthralling rather than exciting, the pleasure of assisting at a sustained attempt to unpack the meaning of the play. Whether John Barton's literal and metaphoric vivisection of *Hamlet*'s fashionable blood-and-guts will capture the imagination of Stratford's tourist audiences remains to be seen, but a more truthful and intellectually coherent production of the play could not be found.

The spectacle and the text

By Edward Timms

Die letzten Tage der Menschheit
Vienna Festival

Imagine hiring the Albert Hall to stage an extended version of *Oh, What a Lovely War!* A dramatic spectacle of this kind formed the highlight of this year's Vienna Festival: a large-scale production of *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit*, Karl Kraus's documentary play about the First World War. Although first published in 1919, it has been rarely performed and widely regarded as unstageable. A complete production would take about fifteen hours, and the enormous range of characters and diversity of styles defy the resources of a conventional theatre. Kraus himself refused to allow the play to be staged during his lifetime, although he included excerpts from it in his public readings. His literary executor, Heinrich Fischer, in collaboration with Leopold Lindtberg, staged a drastically shortened version at the Vienna Festival of 1964, laying great emphasis on the play's textual richness and playing down its theatrical qualities. And it was only with Hans Hollmann's Basel production in 1974 that the impact as a theatrical spectacle was first exploited.

The Vienna Festival production of June 1980, again directed by Hans Hollmann, was even more spectacularly staged in the grand auditorium of the Konzerthaus. The lavishly neoclassical interior of this building with its Art Nouveau refinements might seem an incongruous setting for the enactment of Kraus's black comedy of folly and inhumanity. Hollmann's production transforms the auditorium into a Viennese coffee-house, with an audience seated informally at small round tables, sipping their coffee, smoking, and reading newspapers (reconstructed from the Austrian newspapers of 1914-18). The dramatic action unfolds on a long central platform which runs the whole length of the hall, up to the dais normally occupied by a symphony orchestra. The minute galleries are also used, and loudspeakers and spotlights bombard the audience from all sides. Liberated from the confines of proscenium-arch theatre, the dramatic action expands in all directions and becomes multidimensional. A youthful ensemble of twenty actors is deployed in a dynamic choreography which is particularly effective in the crowd scenes. A further twenty stage hands, dressed in black as bearers at the funeral of mankind, participate in lightning transformations of scene.

The production is a rich dramatic-musical synthesis of elements which might normally appear incompatible: the authenticity of documentary drama, the elegance of ballet, the expressiveness of mime, cabaret motifs, operatic musical effects, farcical stage business, and moments of tragic poignancy and horror. The uniteliving spirit is that of Brecht's programme of "Opera—with innovations": a dissonance interaction of visual, textual and musical elements in which all three carry almost equal weight.

As a dramatic spectacle the play made an extraordinary impact. Running through two full evenings for a total of eight hours, it gripped its audience and elicited rapturous applause. But at times Hollmann overplayed his hand, and the dangers of staging such a textually incentive work in such an extensive auditorium became clearly apparent. The text tended to expand to fill the space available, so that even intimate scenes requiring concentration of focus were played at long range. And the preoccupation with choreography at times became so distracting that the foreground stage business obscured subtlety of meaning. It is not a production with which Kraus himself would have been in sympathy. The conflicting claims of theatrical spectacle and dramatic text form a recurrent theme of his criticism, particularly his interpretation of Shakespeare. His own emphasis lay on the primacy of the text, and his Shakespeare readings were designed to counteract the trend towards overelaborate stage effects.

It is one of the paradoxes of his career that this apostle of the spoken word should also have written one of the most original and theatrically powerful plays of the twentieth century. *Die letzten Tage der Menschheit* is Shakespearean in its extraordinary blending of disparate elements, above all its conjunction of verbal intensity with visual pageantry. And like Shakespearean drama it is open to a wide range of theatrical interpretations. Hollmann's bold, when he sacrifices text to spectacle, has shown how powerfully it can be done. His production has been filmed by Austrian television (which contributed to a total budget of over half a million pounds); and it may thus acquire something like the classical status of Brook's *Marat/Sade*. But an English-language production is also overdue. The problems of translating a play so deeply entrenched in the texture of the German language into terms accessible to an English audience are surely not insurmountable. And given the resources of the National Theatre, it might not be necessary, after all, to hire the Albert Hall.

The Victoria and Albert Museum has mounted a special exhibition of knitting drawn from the reserve collection of the museum's Department of Textiles and Dress. The exhibits will include a pair of Coptic socks dating from the fourth-fifth century AD, a pair of seventeenth-century boot hose, a seventeenth-century pin cushion, early examples of machine knitting, and shawls and baby clothes of lace knitting including a baby gown which won a bronze medal at the Great Exhibition of 1851. Among the twentieth-century knitted garments are a cravat pattern dating by Schiaparelli, coats by Kaffe Fassett and Clutch Cargo, a Bill Gibbs scarf and samples of knitting design by RCA students. The exhibition which follows the Study Day recently organized with the Craft Council will be on display until September 14.

The hidden harp

By Michael Trend

Eszterhazy Baryton Trio
Wigmore Hall

When Dr Burney heard the famous virtuoso Andreas Lidl playing the baryton in England in the 1770s he noted the "exquisite taste and expression" of the former player from Haydn's Esterhazy orchestra, but he was not impressed by the "ungrateful instrument, with the additional embarrassment of base (sic) strings at the back of the neck, with which he accompanied himself, an adjustable expedient in a desert, or even in a house, where there is but one musician; but to be at the trouble of accompanying himself in a great concert, surrounded by idle performers who could take the trouble from your hands . . . seemed at best a work of supererogation."

Last Thursday at the Wigmore Hall there was a rare opportunity to hear the baryton being played again in England. The instrument, a member of the viola family resembling a pear-shaped 'cello and played in an identical position, usually has six or seven gut strings which are played in the conventional manner with a bow. In addition barytone have from ten to fifteen metal sympathetic strings laid under the first set of strings and passing up the back of the wide neck of the instrument. These strings can be plucked by the thumb of the player's left hand, thus giving two possible ways of playing it.

Among musical instruments which have fallen into disuse over the centuries almost none possesses greater interest than the baryton: it was the favoured instrument of Prince Nicholas of Esterhazy, Haydn's patron, and a fine composer. Haydn was obliged to keep up a steady supply of baryton works for his master—they are mostly of not excessive technical complexity and in a limited number of keys. (In the new collected works of the composer six volumes are devoted to works for the instrument, including 126 trios.)

This marvellous repertoire has remained almost unknown, for the music is not successfully adapted for other instruments—indeed, when Johan George Krause re-arranged his nine partitas for unaccompanied baryton he gave the music to two instruments. The combination of the bowing and the plucking, the "hidden harp" as one writer has put it, is unique among Western European musical instruments, and the magnificent music that Haydn and others wrote for it make it very desirable that we should once again be able to hear its flick. Gerardy, whose interest in the baryton developed from seeing Haydn's own instrument in a Viennese museum, and the other two members of the Esterhazy Baryton Trio (Roger Chase, viola and Jonathan Williams, 'cello), are the leaders in this revival. The fine, dignified quality of the baryton, almost nasal when compared to the 'cello (but not unpleasantly so) makes a very distinctive contribution to the ensemble of the trio; and the fact that all three instruments are in the middle tone range makes possible attractive close harmonies. The four trios that were played showed that the baryton has a subtle rather than an extensive range. But the obvious enthusiasm of Mr Gerardy left one keen to hear more of this music. One imagines that the shade of Prince Nicholas was well pleased.

The Sonnmakers' Almanack will give a series of six concerts as part of the Wigmore Hall's Summer Nights season (July 11, 13, 15, 18, 20 and 22). The concerts will as usual be introduced by Graham Johnson who formed the group in 1976; they will include—with the distinguished exception of a performance of Schubert's *Die Winterreise* sung by Richard Jackson.

to the editor

David Ricardo

Sir,—I am grateful to Mark Blaug for his page-long review of my *Economics of David Ricardo* (April 11). There are, however, some misapprehensions regarding my own position on a variety of important issues. I am sure that my reviewer would wish to have them corrected since he will then find it easier to weigh objectively the merits of our respective positions. I shall deal here only with the following matters.

"Hollander is unable to cite even a single sentence in support of his assertions" regarding Ricardo's frequent assumption of identical factor ratios. In fact, I make clear (*EDR*, page 202ff) that Ricardo's *entire chapter* "On Profits" is based on that assumption, for nothing is said therein about the effects of wage changes on relative prices—the major complication, due to differential factor ratios, of his first chapter "On Value".

I am said to have concluded from Ricardo's use of a model in which wages are not at the long-run equilibrium level that "no definite predictions flow from the Ricardian model". In fact, my argument is based on a demonstration, in a chapter devoted to the Corn Law issue, that Ricardo's case against agricultural protection in Parliament and correspondence was largely based on grounds unrelated to the falling rate of profit "predicted" by the static model.

Nor is it true that I conclude from Ricardo's use of a model wherein wages are not at their long-run equilibrium level that "Marshall was quite right to regard him as an early . . . forerunner". I reach this conclusion on the basis of the textual evidence presented in my Chapter 6 on Allocation Mechanisms (which, it is paradoxically allowed, "is very well done").

Regarding Adam Smith, I readily admit in my book his broad interests in the *Wealth of Nations* submerged with those of Ricardo in the *Principles*. That was never the issue. My point is that when Smith devoted himself to economic analysis for purposes of major policy recommendation, particularly the corn laws, he worked with a highly simplified abstract model and was, indeed, taken to task for so doing by contemporaries and near-contemporaries. My case is developed at length in Chapter 1 on "Value and Distribution Analysis, 1776-1816", and pages 652ff.

I appreciate how difficult it may be to face the possibility that a substantial revision of an argument adopted over two decades ago may be required; it is indeed with the exaggerated role accorded the agricultural sector in the reviewer's *Ricardian Economics* (1968) with which I take issue in my book. But I must confess to surprise at some of the central judgments made in the review regarding Ricardo himself. I have in mind Professor Blaug's assertion that Ricardo "measured all his prices in terms of a fictional commodity produced by a ratio of capital to labour that is a mean of the capital-to-labour ratios of the individual industries in the economy, its own capital being in turn produced by a mean capital-labour ratio, and so on ad infinitum". This is, of course, a serious historical misconception.

Equally surprising is the statement that Ricardo "spent all his efforts to proving . . . that money wages only rise for one reason, namely, the increase in real cost of producing agricultural goods" and that his "corn model, measure, was designed to prove that profits depend upon the productivity of agriculture, there is a lacuna in the technology of producing manufactured goods". This is indeed a very serious error. Ricardo devoted his first chapter to the problem of accounting for the fall in the share of labour in a depreciating rising money wages independent of any increasing real cost of wage-goods. For example, "food very easy to procure, while the capital of a country increases irregularly, wages would rise, whilst the price of manufactures remains stationary . . ." Adam Smith was patently the pattern for Ricardo's consideration in consequence of the outcome of relative rates of capital accumulation: "the wage incomes "are not [illegible] in ed 31 immediately expended on food, but are first made to contribute to the other enjoyments of the labourer". *And Ricardo protested to Malthus regarding the latter's misunderstanding of this very proposition*: "I have invariably insisted that high or low profits depended on low and high wages, how then can it be justly said of me that the only cause which I have recognized of high or low profits is the facility or difficulty of providing food for the labourer. I contend that I have also recognized the other cause, the relative amount of population to capital, which is another of the great regulators of wages."

Those statements will be found in the standard edition of Ricardo's *Works and Correspondence* (edited by P. Sraffa, I. 162-3, 165; II. 264-5). They are central to his paper by Sir John Hicks and myself ("Mr Ricardo and the Modorns") for the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 1977. And they are reproduced in my book (pages 327f, 667)—at lengths which, I read, "nothing can excuse"!

With these misapprehensions out of the way and the Ricardo-texts carefully considered it will, I feel sure, be possible to commence a constructive debate on Ricardo's position.

SAMUEL HOLLANDER.
University of Toronto, 100 St George Street, Toronto, Ontario.

Women's Friendship

Sir,—Marilyn Butler traduces me a little (Letters, July 4). In *Women's Friendship in Literature* there is a weighing of the argument in favour of the sexual unanimity of women which I found it necessary to deplore, because I find it to be unrepresentative both inside and outside the confines of the eighteenth-century novel. If Mrs Butler finds that I have overstated the case, she must also allow that Janet Todd does the same, in the opposite direction, at very much greater length.

ANITA BROOKNER.
Courtauld Institute of Art, 20 Portman Square, London W1H 0BE.

'Henry V'

Sir,—I cannot quite follow T. W. Craik's argument (Letters, June 13) that "service" cannot be the subject of "pay" because it is too far back. Applying a rule to the Fallo shows it to be no further back than is the subject of a word "it" in a speech by Fluellen on the same page. We still talk of "paying the service".

Additionally, Professor Craik shows convincingly that the epigram about swing-for-heaven's death, in *Parts I* and *II of Henry IV*, is authentic. Of course, though, that not this makes the insertion of the same epigram in *Henry V* less likely? It is surprising enough to find the same epigram in two of the Henry plays, let alone three.

C. E. JONES.
[illegible] Carlington Road, Sidmouth, Devon.

Arnold Bennett Literary Society

Sir,—I should be much obliged if I could inform your readers of the existence of the Arnold Bennett Literary Society. The society, reactivated in 1978, is keen to attract new members as part of its preparations to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary in 1981 of the death of Arnold Bennett.

In addition to fostering a critical interest in the life and works of Arnold Bennett, the scope of the society has been widened to include aspects of other North Staffordshire literature, and also nineteenth and early twentieth-century local and economic history. The society organizes a regular and varied programme of events and also publishes a newsletter. Membership costs £1.50 and further information can be obtained from either Mr V. Elkin, Secretary, Arnold Bennett Literary Society, Burslem Leisure Centre, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 3QB, or myself (editor of the society).

DAVID FINCH.
[illegible] Kinder Road, Hayfield, Derbyshire SK12 5HS.

'Why the Vietcong Fought'

Sir,—Dennis Duncanson is a distinguished student of Vietnam but in his review of William Darryl Henderson's *Why the Vietcong Fought* (June 27) his judgment seems to have deserted him.

Throughout the review Mr Duncanson's basic question (in his words) is: ". . . were the Vietnamese guerrillas exceptionally brave?" His answer: "It is hard to envisage any form of combat less courageous than 'protracted war' . . ."

I can certainly remember—and I'm sure with a little effort Mr Duncanson, who was also there, could too—the agonies of fear displayed by both Saigon and American soldiers (themselves by no means cowards) when faced with NLF opposition, or even the thought of it.

I invite Mr Duncanson to apply the same scathing analysis to, say, the European Resistance where, too, "the courage that it takes to blow up a bridge . . . is only a fraction of that which is needed to stand guard on the bridge night after night. . . ." The Wehrmacht, I take it, were therefore the truly brave ones?

Mr Duncanson refers also to the "great rear bases" in North Vietnam and China, as if they provided unfair advantage. What, then, was the United States in relation to Saigon?

Inadvertently—but correctly—Mr Duncanson says "it was the guerrillas' fellow countrymen who suffered nine tenths of the casualties, not the intruding [Americans]". Indeed. Most civilian casualties were caused by the Americans and their allies, as anyone who was in Vietnam can testify.

As to why the Vietcong fought, the answer—and one need not admire events in Indochina now to understand *past* events—was provided by Jeffrey Race in his *War Comes to Long An* (Berkeley, 1972). Race, on American advice with experience of many years in Vietnam, wrote, "To occupy rules in the revolutionary movement was perceived by major segments of the local population as defending its interests, while to occupy government roles was seen as being manipulated by outside forces in opposition to local interests". Any non-collaborating Frenchman would understand that.

JONATHAN MIRSKY.
24 Ladbroke Gardens, London W11.

Among this week's contributors

ROBERT M. ADAMS's recent books include *Bed Mouth: Fugitive Papers on the Dark Side*, 1978, and *The Lost Museum: Glimpses of Vanished Originals*, 1980.

MICHAEL ARIS is the author of *Bhutan: The Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom*, 1980, which has just been published.

BERNARD BERGONZI's books include *T. S. Eliot*, 1972, and *Reading the Thirties: Texts and Contexts*, 1978.

RONALD BLYTHE's most recent book is *The View in Winter*, 1979.

VERNON BOGDANOR's *Devolution* was published in 1978.

WILLIAM BOYD's first novel will be published by Hamish Hamilton next year.

PHILIP BRADY is a lecturer in German at Birkbeck College, London.

LOUIS CHEVALIER's books include *Les Parisiens*, 1965, and *L'Assassinat de Paris*, 1977. His *Montmartre du plaisir et du crime* will be published shortly.

RICHARD COSE is Professor of Modern History at the University of Oxford. His most recent book, *Promotedes*, has just been published.

MARTIN COOPER's books include *Ideas and Music*, 1966, and *Beethoven: the Last Decade*, 1970.

RUSSELL DAVIES is television critic of *The Sunday Times*. He has recently translated the libretto of Goldoni's *La Speziale*.

J. B. DONNE's translation of Gauguin's *Noa Noa* will be published later this year.

DENIS DONOGHUE holds the Henry James Chair of Letters at New York University.

ALVIN GOLDMAN is the author of *A Theory of Human Action*, 1971.

SIR DAVID HERT is the author of *A Don at War*, 1966, and *On the Spot*, 1975.

FRANCIS HIGBEY is the author of *The Raven and the Writing Desk*, 1976.

KENNETH S. LYNN teaches American History at Johns Hopkins University.

T. P. MATUSSIAN is Deputy Director of the Shakespeare Institute of the University of Birmingham.

CAROLINE MOORHEHEAD's *Fortune's Hostages: Kidnapping in the World Today* was published earlier this year.

JANET MORGAN edited Richard Crossman's *Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*, 1976-77.

ELIZABETH MONROE's books include *The Changing Balance of Power in The Persian Gulf*, 1972.

PATRICK O'CONNOR is the editor and publisher of *A Tribute to Yvonne Printemps*, 1978.

RAMON L. PATTEN is the author of *Charles Dickens and his Publishers*, 1978.

RUPERT RUBBINS is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Sheffield.

CAROL RUMENS's collections of poems include *A Strange Girl*, 1973, and *A Work of Mirrors*, 1979.

EDWARD SAID's books include *Orientalism*, 1978.

SIMON SOLOMON is a Rumanian poet and translator.

JENNY TURLOW is the editor of *Essays on Literature and Art by Walter Pater*, 1975.

RICHARD WOLHEIM's recent books include *Wittgenstein*, 1971, and *Art and its Objects*, 1977.

T. P. WALTON is a Fellow of Worcester College, Cambridge.

FRANCIS WATSON's books include *A Concise History of India*.

ALLEN WHITMAN is the author of *The Obituary Book*, 1971, and *Come to Judgement*, 1980.

PERCY M. YOUNG's *George Grove* was published earlier this year.

Author, Author

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than Friday, August 1. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers to be opened, or failing that the most nearly correct—in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries should be addressed to the Editor, The Times Literary Supplement, PO Box 7, New Printing House Square, Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EZ, and marked "Author, Author" on the envelope. The solution and result will appear in our issue of August 8.

Competition No. 26

1 What's in the *Times*?—a scold
At the Emperor deep and cold;
He has taken a bride
To his gruesome side,
That's as fair as himself is bold!
There they sit ermine-stoled,
And she powders her hair with gold.
I learnt my complement of classic French
(Kept pure of Balzac and apologism)
And German also, since she liked a range
Of liberal education,—tongues, but hooks.

3 There's a Me Society down at Cambridge,
Where my works, cum *notis variorum*,
Are talked about: Well, I require the same bridge
That Euclid took toll of as *Asinorum*.

Result of Competition No 26.
Winner: Ernest Mehew, 6 Abercorn Road, Stanmore, Middlesex.
Answers:
In the words of one of the many readers who submitted correct entries, Peter Saccio of Etna, New Hampshire, the link (and we could not have put it better ourselves) is that all three quotations are "semi-archaic predictive verses used in a quest-thriller of the twentieth century".

1 Seek where under midnight's sun
Laggard crops are ripening gold;
Where the sower casts his seed in
Furrows of the fields of Eden;
Where beside the sacred tree
Spins the seer who cannot see.
—John Buchan, *The Three Hostages*

2 Where the westerly sine of the furthermost mountain
Hovers falcon-like over the heart of the bay,
Past seven sad leagues and a last lonely fountain,
A mile towards tomorrow is the dead garden lay.
—Michael Innes, *The Secret Vanguard*

3 If Poatisbright would crowned be,
Three strange happenings must be seen.
Before he wears his crown again,
Thrice must die mighty Dell.
Before he shall his sceptre hold,
And ere he to his birthright come
Stricken must be Mephequot spring.
—Markey Allingham, *Secret Danger*

From Haussmann to high-rise

By Louis Chevalier

NORMA EVENSON:
Paris: A Century of Change, 1878-1978
352pp. Yale University Press. £18.
0 300 02210 7

Whichever period one turns to, from the time of the *fabliaux*, Rutebeuf and Villon up to the present, Paris has always been observed, experienced, described, narrated and judged from one quite different, opposed and generally hostile points of view: the point of view of those interested only in its buildings, and the point of view of those who are interested only in its people and see the buildings only in relation to the people. This is probably true of many other capital cities; perhaps it is true of all. But to judge from the French sources, as well as foreign writings, this clear-cut division into two camps seems to characterize Paris more than any other great city.

There is the Paris of those who build, by whatever name we call them or by which they call themselves—from the fair one to the architect, which for Paul Valéry was the sum of all perfection, to the frightful mumo of developer, taking in on the way that of "maison", a species far worse than that of the contemptible and not forgotting the "prospecteurs" whom Giraudoux's Madwoman of Chaillot (who was more or less a contemporary of Valéry's Eupalinos) contemplated hurling into the city's sewers. This Paris is also the Paris of those concerned above all with the operations of the prospectors, whom they soon go on explaining and justifying and to whom they devote the majority of their own works: historians and geographers concerned to describe the city's transformations; qualified town planners who find it wiser and more prudent to write books than to build houses; and also—as typically French species, this—a number of builders who deem it useful to explain and comment on (in an often muddled prose nevertheless described as being lyrical or visionary) the meaning of the structures they have erected, even though this is perfectly obvious. Their intuitive is laudable, and has the added advantage that during such times as they are "thinking" or writing, they are not actually building—from how many disasters were Paris and France not spared by this innocent mania of Le Corbusier's!

Then there is the other Paris of those who are interested in the city only in terms of what goes on there and of what has gone on there in past centuries but which, for them, is ever-present, recognizable and moving. They talk of Paris but they mean Parisians, given that Paris herself is a person, and of the feminine gender. They form a vast tribe, variegated, composite yet fraternal, firmly united in the way they see, love and also hate and curse (not less those of the other persuasion). They include novelists, poets and painters, not forgetting the historian who is himself novelist, painter and poet, and those specifically Parisian types: the tireless walker of the city's streets, or the bourgeois who used in the old days to write his memoirs, or the concierge who sweeps the doorstep in the mornings and chats with his neighbour about the events of the night, to the great advantage of the novelist or historian who happens to be passing and can fill his notebook.

This being a much simplified but, I believe, accurate division of the documentary evidence on Paris and the social groups that evidence expresses, there is no doubt but that those who belong to the first of my two categories will welcome the appearance of Norma Evenson's *Paris: A Century of Change, 1878-1978*. This is a great and happy event, for two reasons. First, there is the high quality of the book. And then, Norma Evenson is an American, a quest-thriller of the twentieth century.

Let me explain why. The fact that Norma Evenson is American means in the first place that she is perfectly disinterested, sincere and honest, which is not the case with most of those who have gone into raptures over the recent transformations of Paris; they have produced an entire literature to the glory of the developers which itself reeks of developers' money. Indeed, it is hard to make out what in it is the product of needy or merely mediocre geographers and sociologists and what is quite simply "free" publicity, as the newspapers call it.

Construction site near the Arc de Triomphe, 1967.

But the importance which Professor Evenson's nationality adds to her book stems also from another fact, a genuinely historical one and one which, I will admit, impresses me. It marks an epoch in the history of American writing on Paris. For the first time—or so I believe—a competent and authoritative American voice has been raised to describe and explain, in relatively favourable terms, a city that no longer has anything in common with the one formerly beloved of so many American writers and of their English friends. In the 1950s, I seem to remember, Lawrence Durrell wrote to Henry Miller, whose last book he thought lacked inspiration, to come and pay a visit to Paris. "What a city!", he exclaimed. It was this self-same dazzling city which, as Evenson rightly tells us, "the most authoritative voices" were beginning to depict as presented the hugest inconveniences. I fancy I can still hear those "most authoritative voices" echoing in my ears. But in those days, when they grew too unbearable or indecent, it was always possible to oppose to them the voices of America. Our town planners and technocrats were all the more impressed by evidence from American writers because they had never read a single line of them nor even heard their names.

It was in the name of Henry Miller indeed that I was able to prevent a particular horror being put up in a part of Paris he loved: "You can't do that to Miller. He's quite capable of writing an article that'll be read the world over saying you are criminals and idiots to boot." An article by Miller! The threat was sufficient, even if the planners did confuse Henry Miller with Marilyn Monroe's Miller, whom they know about through the cinema. The ghastly project was abandoned, and I had one more reason to adore Marilyn Monroe. Alas, and again alas! From now on, they will always be able to hurl Professor Evenson's book in my face, a threat all the more fearsome in that I find it a book full of good qualities.

And this brings me to the essence of what I have to say about it, to the comments prompted by a book devoted to the buildings of Paris in someone who belongs to the second category, to the tribe of those interested only in its people but who, on occasions, not being specialists but taking to intrude everywhere, feel the need to interest themselves also in its buildings. As I have said, I think highly of Professor Evenson's book considered in itself, in its actual subject-matter, which is the material development of Paris, and within the precise limits of its intentions and ambitions. If I compare this book with what has been published in France which I know all too well, it is a model of its kind, for in advance of the others. Some may say that that was easy, given that those others are worthless, but that is not what I mean. All comparisons aside this is a good and important book.

It is so for the scope of its own architecture, for the vast landscape of a hundred or so years which it unfolds before us, quietly yet boldly, and with complete success. Most of the existing descriptions of Paris relate, the best of them, to either the Second Empire or to the Third Republic, or, the really hateful ones, to the great changes in contemporary Paris. Books which dare to cover the entire period at a single go are rare. This one does so, and it is exemplary.

The book is important also in the scope of its documentation. Evenson has seen everything, read everything; her bibliography is the fullest imaginable, a summation of everything written on the development of Paris, especially in the past thirty years. It is all there: the essential reports and preliminary studies that preceded major decisions; the plans that were chosen and the ones that were discarded—from whose presence in the book one can learn that, even worse damage might have been done to Paris than has in fact been done. Evenson has done her work thoroughly and, reading her, one comes to appreciate how, in order to bring it to fruition, she has had to read unreadable reports, frequent unintelligible people and put up with an urban sociology which is merely the bastard offspring of the great American sociology, as well as with so-called "prospective" geography, which means nothing but "geography of planning", which is no better) and from which the great French tradition of geography—the only living tradition, embodied in our own time by Maurice le Lannou—turns away in horror.

This book finally is loyal. It carries loyalty to the point of printing some fine illustrations which are a terrible contradiction of the architectural historian's thesis that is Norma Evenson's main subject. This thesis is that, when all is said and done, Paris has always changed, that all capital cities, even the most glorious, must evolve, and Paris is no exception. This necessity was recognized by Haussmann, whose memoirs have just been luxuriously reprinted by an inspired publisher. It was recognized 100 years later by people who saw themselves as Haussmann's successors and some of whom went so far as to inscribe as a motto on their projects the lament of Baudelaire—who knows how they ever learnt of it in the first place—

"Et le cœur d'une ville—Change plus vite, hélas! Que le cœur d'un mortel".

In point of fact one need only look at Evenson's illustrations to see that such was not the case. Despite the great works he undertook and what was called his "surgery", Haussmann changed nothing in the essential character of the "urban organism" as it had developed progressively and without a break through the ages.

He did not affect the unity of the city, the division of its main functions, or the diversity of its districts. What is more, it was thanks to his work that from the end of the nineteenth century in the huge undertakings of the 1960s, the city knew a period of urban splendour greatly. From the pictures in Norma Evenson's book, each one of which suggests some literary enthusiasm: from Balzac's "promenade enchantée", or the splendid hallucinations which remind me of the best moments in nineteenth-century novels, in the old streets that recall some itinerary in Julius Romains or Henry Miller, or a historical account by Richard Cobb. Browsing among these illustrations one says to oneself, with Ernest Hemingway, that assuredly "Paris est une fête"; or rather was one.

For the *fête* is over. First because the setting has almost entirely vanished, which contributes so much in its perpetuation. The city has not changed. It has given way to an agglomeration which has nothing in common with the city as it forever was. The old urban unity has gone, powerfully massed as it was around the "centre of centres" or around Les Halles, which were the very guts and the heart and the life of Paris, in place of the wonderful lists, of old, we now have the hole in the ground that our *bourgeois gentilshommes* call resplendently the Forum, a word of whose true meaning they are ignorant, and which our 1980 Gavroches have renamed the *fontoin*, a term that says it all. The splendid old *quartiers* have gone, chief among them Belleville. The diversity has gone. In its place, the uniformity and banality of tower blocks. French travellers to the United States discovered the skyscrapers and enthused over them, seeing them as the expression of the national genius: "elles sont debout leurs villes!" cried Céline. In Paris they are an eyesore, for all the pompous and generally mythological names given them by the developers, whereas we all know that they have only one name between them, which is money or, as our Gavroches would say, *le fric*.

So the setting for the *fête* has gone, and the *fête* itself, and pleasure; and with them that other marvellous by-product of the collective life of Paris, which was its creativeness. How can we get new ideas in this wilderness of tedium? "Désormais il ne se pose plus rien d'important à Paris": an old Parisian, proud once of the creative strength of his city, finds it hard to get used in this now common observation, which is merely borne out by the activities—quite rightly called "cultural"—of the Pompidou Centre. At the end of the eighteenth century, in his *Tableau de Paris*, Mercier tells of an explorer coming ashore on an island and being asked by a savage what was new from the Palais Royal. In the 1950s the same could have been true for Saint-Germain-des-Prés. Existentialism will prove to have been the final chapter in the old story of Parisian creativity. From this point of view, Sartre's death marks an epoch also, in the general evolution of the city and in many fields besides philosophy, literature and politics. After Being, Nothingness. Absolute Nothingness. If one day I write the history of these past twenty years, my title is ready to hand: "Les années zéros de Paris".

The deserted village

By Richard Cobb

A long, dreary avenue, its width emphasized by the low line of grey, peeling houses on each side, bordered by sad, regimented trees. Down the avenue march the men in blue, without a word, without music, to the weary sound of regular ran! ran! Robert, aged six, holds the hand of his elder brother, Roger. For a time they run, following the blue men, till, tired, they stop, as the men disappear, leaving the avenue empty, quiet, and restoring to it its infinite hopelessness: no *voie triomphale*, rather the *chemin de l'abattoir*, as the men—from Chartres or farther still—tramp northwards, to be swallowed up by the Gare de l'Est and the Gare du Nord in 1917. The men are there, they are there no more, as if by some trick of early cinema. The children, frightened, Robert clinging more tightly to his brother's hand, turn off the avenue, towards home, rue du Docteur Henouille, in Cachan, on the southern rim of Paris: picture-postcard country, the terminus of a tram, two *pissotières* facing one another, the monument *aux morts* is still to come.

It might be Dabit country. It is in fact the first distinct memory of Robert Lageat, nicknamed "Robert des Halles", no bonffleurd, but a true Parisian, conceived in the rue des Lombards, spending the most active part of his life within, a topography bordered by the rue Beaubourg, the rue Quincampoix (la Quincampe), the rue Rambuteau (la Rembute), the boulevard Sébastopol (le Topo) and the sinister commissariat of the rue des Prouvaires, the favourite abode of the Parisian *gosperd* (rat). Lageat is now in his late sixties and the co-owner, with his son Jacquy, of a *bouillotte*, 9, rue de Loppe, in the Xle.

Robert's mother, at the opening of the epoken film, is a laundress (*blanchecoille*) who does all her loundry by hand and then delivers it all over Paris in a handcart. The father, Jular Amadieu, a hard-drioking fighter, working intermittently, when not whoring or easing, on the uncertain frontiers of les Halles, had been killed somewhere on the Marne in 1915. Reger helps his mother in the house. Shortly after the Cachan scene, the three move back into Paris—the laundry work must have been merely a temporary, desperate stop-gap—passage Peacquy, off the rue Quincompoix. Most of the relatives on the mether's aide—the Magdelelines—had been connected with the fish and vegetable trade in the Hallee ever Mace the Second Empire.

The close connection between trade eneclotlee and family relutionships is: once more emphasized: when she mother remarries. Lageat, the etepfather, is a fruit and vegetable *marchnad de quot saisone*, trading from a barrow off the rue Quincempoix. The rough, bolsterous Atiller dominote the lives of the whiele family, dragging them from bed at two in the mormleg, and releasing them, for some secondary employment, etor midday. Robert, for a time, spends the afternoons and eorly evenlogs wocking for an Auvergnet bougnot, hauling sacks of coal all over northern Paris, even to the very foot of the Sacré Coeur, an area which, he says, eeemed to be "eux daches" (in the entipeides) as seen from central Parie. Save for the old Vélodrome-d'Hiver, in Grenelle, there is hardly a mention of the Left Bank in the whole book.

In the immobility of their work end leisure topography—the daily litnécery le rue des Blancs-Manteaux, rue Simon-le-Franc, rue Beaubourg, rue Saint-Merri, rue Saint-Martin, rue Quincampoix—as well as in the recruitment to their trade of provincial relatives of the stepfather, from Décaseville, the Lageats, working at a killing pace in the 1920s and '30s, conform, perhaps even consciously, to an eighteenth-century pattern, rough and brutal, but also fraternal, gossipy, honburable, relying entirely on the spoken word—Robert's employers, the midget couple, the Lourds, vegetable wholesalers, are illiterate—and dominated by physical effort, by immense meele and by immense libations.

Lageat describes les Halles as a village—also, a lost village—in which, in the summer, the inhabitants of la Quincampe bring their chairs out on the pavements, in which no one ever goes away on holiday, and in which, on Sundays, the men withdraw to a small café, kept by an Auvergnat, *pour taper le carton*, belote, etc. It is a world peopled by ingenious and elegant nicknames, referring either to provincial origin or to physical characteristics. Later we encounter an all-in wrestler who has a stunter and who is called *One-gue*.

But for Robert, before the grinding work, yet die relative freedom, of the anarchic Halles, there is an abominable interlude as a border in a clerical school at Vanves, north-west of Paris, the Collège Fénelon, a dreadful place, the children, most of them war orphans, subjected to the brutality of *pions*, who compensate for their own wretched condition by taking it out on their small victims and by an archaic attachment to banqueting of royalist convictions. It is a classic account of six years of misery that might have been written by Vallès. Black years made even more sombre by the death of Roger in 1919 and by the perhaps calculated hardness of a mother apparently incapable of a word of affection: "mon trésor", "mon petit chéri" were not expressions of tenderness ever heard passage Peacquy. His half-sister, likewise confined to the feminine equivalent of the awful Fénelon—called, rather appropriately le Pension Jeanne d'Arc, "la bonne Lorraine" having so often given her name to the rancid and sparse institutions of French ecclesiastical charity—also died, shortly after leaving the cheerless Pension. Such early deaths are a reminder of the reality of working-class life in central Paris in the 1920s. Later, we learn of the death of Raeul, Robert's brother-in-law, a miner from the Decazeville coal *bassin* at thirty-three, from silicosis.

At sixteen, Robert is fully engaged in helping his mother and his stepfather in the back-breaking work of their stall. Lageat's account, as recollected in talking to Claude Dubeis, a journalist and a native of the same quarter, is dominated by the nostalgia for a marvellously living world, now nothing more than a memory, and even then soon to be lost. Why, he asks ebullitively, call the métro station Pierre Lescot, "les Halles" when the old population has been swept away, the markets exiled to Rungis, the *gasperds* too in search of a new home, and the whole area museumified and devitalized? *His récit* has a sad charm of what is already a piece of Parisian social history.

The young Lageat, with more and more of his relatives engaged in the night work of the markets—after his marriage to a girl from Decazeville, she too is incorporated in the brilliantly lit night of *fruits et légumes* (the bloody territory of butchery and carcass is a little to the south)—develops in pugnacity as well as in muscle. Compact and low on the ground, by eighteen he has established himself as a respected fighter, his cauliflower ears attesting to his expertise.

The Halles and its extraordinary mixed and transitory population, as it changes through the night—only the garish prostitutes operate right round the clock—are the principal heroes and villains of Lageat's book. But he moves on from the Halles, first to accomplish military service in the Chasseurs Alpins, something that he greatly enjoys, including the discovery of the Mediterranean and the Alps. Then he takes to the boxing gymnasiums of the faubourg Montmartre, switching at the time of the Front populaire (to which he is a whole-hearted adherent) to acrobatics and wrestling. After brilliant war service in the *corps franc*, he returns to the lurid blue nights of the Occupation, in various resistances, appearing, in the great cinemas, before a mixed audience of Germans, black marketeers, collaborationists, and specialists in torture from the rue Lauriston.

The description of the febrile night life of the capital in 1940 and in 1941 has seldom been bettered, save in films. The Paris of *Les Enfants du Paradis*, itself filmed in 1943, is relived with intensity, and with the same bizarre encounters, the same *équivoques*, the same intermingling of villains and heroes, of torturers and résistants, in the darkness of immense *salles*—the Rex, the Normandie—the audience riveted to Robert and Andrée, as they evoke, in acrobatic dance, to the tune of a *java*, the swift and sinister movements of the bad boys *à gueules de raie*, a beautiful phrase, and the bad girls, rue de Loppe, offering the audience a frieseet of violence, while the red-and-black proclamations of executions go up outside.

All at once disgust ensues. Lageat contacts a French officer in Madrid, who points out that his place is in France. He takes a leading part in the Résistance: the Lot, is severly wounded, and nearly dies. At 33, his career as a wrestler and as an acrobat is ot an end. At one stage he lives perilously on the rim of organized crime. There is a very visual evocation of Marcel Delrue, at one time a Lille hairdresser, on the run from the Germens, after his escape from Loos, and soon engaged in vast operatiuns sultad in his origins, involving Belgian tobaccu. Delrue, blue-eyed, fearless, always dressed in black, with a black trilby, is involved in a shoot-up in which a gendarme is killed, is recovvered to Catholicism in prison, and is guillotinad in 1952. One of his former officers manages to persuade Lageat to keep on the right side of the law.

The family move to the rue Beaubourg and, after the war, Lageat and his son Jacquy acquire the Balajo in the rue de Lappe. The last section of the book describes that remarkable street and its surrounding quarter—la Bastoche and the rue de Charonne, in the XIe (the Lageat, in refugeing from the Halles believes, perhaps unstingily, will hold out, at least for a few years, as one of the last enclaves of "l'esprit parisien", of Parisian speech, and of a night life that has monopoled to survive the hopeless darkness of the rest of Europe, and in which the coloured neon signs still spoil out excitement, violence, and impudent fraternity.

Lageat's life is exceptional. Few people of his background could ever move managed to escape from the iron timetable of les Halles. The greatest interest of his book comes from the inventiveness and sheer vulgarity of his language, a Parisian that would have brought joy to "les trois A" (les Trois Argotiers). (Ile also refers, in respect of les Halles to les *4 B: bouillot, bouffe, bibine* and boise, o full programme). As he states, it is not an elevated language ("las discussions rasnient le bitume"), its centre of gravity often placed at the level of the buttum: "le pétouler près du gazon", of someone short like himself. Due of his acrobatic portraeys, "momo Andréa", is deliciously described as "frappadingue du vulseur"; in one of their acts, he finds "son faubourg à portée de ma bouche": *valseur, faubourg, pétouler* all evoke the bum, "Pas du cul" is o finely expressive insult. "La bnse de persil" is located on the other side of the female anatomy. Readers will no doubt find their own way with *tapa, mire, les schmitts, cille, rifer, doul, rosmes, gaspard, surin, lordoire, ache, sacoche*; the last four instruments frequently carried and occasionally employed rne de Lappe. "La Maison du Pelinan Facile" refers to the police, "la Gestapo, plinque" to the Gestapo. French and German. Here is Lageat himself, "le tiri parisien", preening one of his Yugoslav wrestling coaches: "Rosjour René, c'est re-moi". And he observes, with delicacy, on the subject of the lack of a bathroom, pas sogo Perquay: "ic continuait à me lover le cul dans une cuvette". After the move to the rue Beaubourg, they do get a bathroom, as well as a bedroom and a dining-room set, the latter in the Dutch style, both of which would appear to have been "signé Lévitan."

He refers to commercial travellers "de passage à Panama sapée Belle Jardinière". And once he starts fishing up the Marne, he equips himself in the full fisod B.H.V. One of his *cillies*, rue de Lappe, he describes admiringly as "un "jacteuse de jar"; there are others he describes less admiringly as "des qui snlivent à la nidinesse à la dnctylo". He is a pretty good *jacteur* himself. He is also a *chiqueur*, a race that, even in the 1970s, has somehow managed to survive.

Apart from the language, we encounter a *fine fleur* of personalities that includes a Monsieur de la Rotule, président du Club des Cinq Kus, who shows their bare *valeurs* somewhere on the Marne, Louis le Cosaque (a *furet*), Gédéon Gida and Stan Karolyi, two Magyar wrestlers, Dragan Draganoff, a Bulgarian one, l'Ange Blanc, a Spanish one, Rinat la Bartonnille, o rainteur, Le Grand Phonse, Henri Pefeu (a bit elsewhere with his *flingue*), Tontou la Pédale, Poil au Naze, Kid Janos and Assane Diouf, both boxers, Yan le Gall, a Breton *rouerheur*, Barutin, and the brothers Richard, René, Roméo and Raymond Bulwaver, who run the Club des Lumeurs Yougoslaves, and situated, along with o boxing saloon, in the Palais Berlitz.

As long as Robert and Thérèse and their son Jacquy and their grandson Phi-Phi are around, there is still hope for Paris and for the survival of a few authentic *Parisiennes*, even if it means going to the XIe to find them. Ou Kast Young Man, *Jeunesse, Messieurs Dames*.

ROBERT LAGEAT :
Robert des Halles
Avec la collaboration de Claude Dubois
Paris : Lattès

Music while you drink

By Patrick O'Connor

"certainement un bon musicien, nonobstant l'habitude qu'il a prise de trotter la mesure et le rythme à coups de pied". Although *cafés chantantes* were banned again later the same year, the popularity of the *café concert* had been born, and the tradition whereby they existed in the summer under the trees of the Champs Elysées, then transferred as winter quarters elsewhere, continued throughout the Second Empire.

In 1867 a further change in the law permitted artists in cafés to appear in costume (until then they had only been allowed to wear evening dress) and saw the birth of the eccentric comic singer. During the next thirty years performers became categorized by their voices and costumes. Into *chanteurs "genre anglais", diseurs, gommeux, gomblliards* and *chanteurs réalistes*. They sang about love, of course, but also about food, treachery and death — Jules Jouys's "La mange" (one of the nicknames for the guillotine) became a favourite with the *chanteuses réalistes*. Léo Cloretie defined the concept of such songs as late as 1895: "Elles ont pourtant leur intérêt ces chansonettes, et elles ne sont pas des documents négligeables, si l'on songe qu'elles représentent d'une façon les prédilections d'un gros public de la masse".

The *fin de siècle* period, which saw the popularity of the cafés at its zenith, was dominated by a handful of singers: Eugénie Buffet, the first to present the character of a *pierreuse*, or street-walker, the comics Dranem, Polin and Mayol (the favourite singer of Proust and Reynaldo Hahn), and of course Yvette Guilbert. In a photograph reproduced in *Le Café-Concert*, Guilbert looks younger and prettier than in any artist's depiction of her, chin resting on clasped hands inside the celebrated black gloves (this is said in the caption to have "inspiré à Toulouse-Lautrec une affiche célèbre"). In fact Guilbert never allowed Lautrec to make this poster, or to paint her portrait—the reactions his drawings and lithographs provoked in her ranged from "Please make me a little less ugly" to an outraged "Petit monstre! Mais vous avez fait une horreur!"

The authors date the demise of the *café concert* to the outbreak of war in 1914, but of course its tradition continued in music-halls and *cabarets*. The difference between a *café concert* and a cabaret was at first simply that at the latter the entertainment was free—the players and singers were merely there to amuse the customers while they drank; at the former one went especially for the music and paid an entrance fee, being under no particular obligation to eat or drink. The distinction became confused in the 1890s and later the term cabaret (at least in Paris) came to mean a place of entertainment which was likely to prove considerably more expensive than a simple *café concert*. In the 1890s, however, the most celebrated cabaret of all, Le Mirliton, presided over by Aristide Bruant, advertised "Bock—65 centimes" in letters as large as those which features the proprietor, "Chez lui tous les soirs". Even today Paris has numerous *cafés théâtres*, in some of which songs can be heard. The only difference is that no one sings them afterwards in the streets; when one encounters a *vieilleur* or *accordéoniste* they still play the songs of the Belle Epoque.

In the heyday of the *café concert*, Marie Dubas would probably have been a gommeuse. In her tour de chant she mixed popular songs, poems, dramatic monologues and old French folk-songs. In their biography of her, Robert de Laroche and François Bellair (her aunt) take the lyrics of her songs as a theme to follow her career and the changing style of the *chanson* in the Paris music-hall of the 1920s and '30s. In an appendix they catalogue 200 songs, the majority of them created by their subject, adding the regrettably much shorter list of gramophone records which she made. There is a splendid recording in existence of her singing "La femme du voleur", in which she asks "Est-ce qu'on est obligés de chanter dans le micro?" and the audience shouts back "Non!". Dubas had no need of artificial aids to her voice, o typically Parisian one, hailing as she did from the fifteenth arrondissement.

Her parents, Jewish refugees from Poland, had settled there in the 1880s, and before becoming one of the most famous popular singers of her time she pursued a career in the straight theatre, which she was able to resume when she was forced to spend the war years in Switzerland. There is a telling photograph here taken in 1943, showing her with a group of French internees listening to the wireless. Clearly the news was bad.

Dubas's style depended much on her caricatures of local types and on argot, and did not travel well, so that she never enjoyed the worldwide fame of Yvette Guilbert, her inspiration. The young Edith Piaf was in turn encouraged by Dubas and wrote "Marie, vous êtes la plus grande et la plus chanteuse". When Piaf had her first success it was with one of Dubas's songs—"Mon Légionnaire", with its famous line:

Il était mince, il était beau,
Il sentait bon le sable chaud.

This book is a charming memorial to her performances and to the era to which she contributed her art.

FRANÇOIS CARADEC and ALAIN WEILL :
Le Café concert
190pp. Paris Atelier Hachette/Messin.
2 01 006940 4
ROBERT DE LAROCHE and FRANÇOIS BELLAIR :
Marie Dubas
319pp. Paris : Cendeau, 10 rue Honoré Chevalier, Paris 6.
2 86 298010 2

Alain Weill, who le curator of the Musée de l'Affiche in Paris and François Caradec, regent of the Collège de Pataphysique, have produced on' excellent history of the Parisian *café-concert*. Using some 340 illustrations their text balances nicely the social phenomenon of these cafés with the history of the establishments themselves, their star performers and the songs they sang.

The first *café-concert*, Le Caveau or the Café des Aveugles, opened in 1731, when a change in the law permitted societies to be formed devoted to song; the star attraction was la Jolie Rosalbe, whose main appeal was her beauty rather than her singing. Under Napoleon, however, the *cafés chantants* were closed down and successive governments put heavy restrictions on them, as constituting meeting-places. In 1848, when for five months censorship of the theatre was lifted, L'Estaminet Lyrique opened in the Passage Jouffroy, and here Théodore Hannon (1836-1885), created the text of his famous songs, "Le Pain", Berlioz condescended to refer to him as

GEOFFREY SAMPSON :
Making Sense
215pp. Oxford University Press.
£7.95.
0 19 215950 X

For the want of a theory

By T. P. Waldron

Though few seem yet aware of the fact, academic linguistics is in a state of extreme crisis verging on collapse: not as a result of attack from without but from dissension and disintegration within. Ironically, this comes just as an attempt was being made to transform what had long been a mystic cult into something more socially relevant. Nothing illustrates this better than the two books under review. Roy Harris has said elsewhere that "language is too important to be left to linguists", and on the flap of Geoffrey Sampson's book "theoretical linguistics", here used to mean Chomsky's views on language and mind, is described as an "academic hoax". Harris, Sampson and Chomsky are all concerned with what is known in the trade as Sociolinguistics and Psycholinguistics. They believe language theory matters since our understanding of language is closely related to the understanding we have of human behaviour in general. There, it must be said, the resemblance ends, since all three differ profoundly on the nature of this relation, and indeed on the nature and function of language.

The most refreshing thing about Professor Harris's book is his irreverent attitude to all that is futile, trivial and pretentious in academic linguistics to date. He has fun with Bloomfield's experimental "discovery that pin has just three phonemes; and he shrewdly notes that while linguists proclaim the primacy of speech, most of their theory is based on the context-free written language: language is thus "cut off not only from its behavioural concomitants but also from its very origins, to become an ethereal "system". He even questions the much-vaunted descriptive value of linguistic structuralism. The proliferation of ever-new descriptive categories and recursive neologisms ensures that the descriptive task will be permanent. The result: endless monographs, articles, counter-articles, replies and rejoinders in a thousand reviews designed to perpetuate such Byzantine debates. This lavishly financed abuse, to which Dr Sampson also alludes, is of course endemic to the humanities and social sciences at large.

Harris, it is true, has his own foibles. He has a weakness for argument based on analogy, supposition, and vast historical generalizations. It is surely unfair to make the medieval trivium responsible for the inadequacies of modern linguistics; or to blame poor Dunstan for "neocentric surrogationalism". He did not say nouns substitute things but only that they signify them, which is true.

All this, however, is as nothing compared with the author's central thesis, which is so momentous that, if he is right, the prospect of increasing incomprehension within a linguistically divided humanity scarcely bears contemplation: while, if he is wrong, we must not only establish *why*—since many think likewise—but also find a rational alternative which might afford humanity some hope of discovering its common interest (in survival) before it is too late.

Harris sees language exclusively as a form of communication, to the neglect of any other function or utility. He believes linguistics to be a *science* which will one day find its niche in an allegedly "nascent science of human communication". (The notion that language might be the basis of all distinctively human communication is not one that his preconceptions allow him to entertain.) He also embraces an extreme form of linguistic and cultural relativism in which the question "What is language?" is quite ousted by "what he vaguely calls "the concept of a language". Even this seems devoid of theoretical interest, however, since we learn by page three that "the language-user already has the only concept of a language worth having". If Sampson thinks this

reticul linguistics is a hoax, for Harris it hardly seems to exist. His book in fact is expressly designed to repudiate the notion of a "human faculty or activity of language common to all mankind". He laments that "claims that it is the capacity for language-using that distinguishes man from brute are repeated endlessly". He thinks this belief was foisted on us by Greek grammarians and the Bible, but unes in dismay that "even freethinkers do not question the uniqueness of man's linguistic capacity".

Professor Harris, however, certainly does. By first dismissing any possibility of a general theory of human language, then making language merely one form of communication among others, and finally extending the concept to include the antics of a few carefully conditioned monkeys (whom he believes capable of conceptualization), he slips by easy stages from sociolinguistics into sociobiology, which now kids fair to supplant structuralism as the orthodox academic mode of misconceiving the nature of human intelligence. What is happening before our eyes is "the ultimate dethroning of *homo sapiens* as the uniquely gifted living creature capable by virtue of his mastery of language and hence of reason". Only now, it seems, are we witnessing "the collapse of an entirely anthropocentric universe" in which, somewhat pleonastically, man was the specially privileged position". It is conceded that this is too far-reaching a "scientific event" not to be traumatic.

Language theory all the while has been trying to offer "reassurance" on three seemingly irreconcilable points: reassurance that language is "the means of making a mere agglomeration of individuals into a society"; that it is also "the basis for a potential brotherhood of man"; and, strangely, "that *homo sapiens* was not a lonely Caliban-figure alienated by the mysterious gift of tongues from all other living creatures". How "the concept of a language" can meet these conflicting demands "remains the underlying dilemma of contemporary linguistics". Harris certainly exaggerates when he claims that as many are convinced of the essential link between language and the emergence of mind, but he makes his negative thesis with admirable directness.

Sampson arrives at the same conclusion by a more circuitous route. The stated aim of *Making Sense* is to defend a creative, open-ended view of human intelligence, as against the pre-determined, limited view which—he rightly argues—is implicit in Chomsky's conception of language and mind. In many respects, however, he admits to being "more of o Chomskyan than Chomsky", whose "empirical work on linguistic universals" is declared "a novel scientific theory". He accepts Chomsky's incredible thesis that syntax is genetically determined, and believes that linguistics and psychology are "highly formal, quasi-mathematical disciplines" to which Chomsky has made important contributions. In fact Chomsky is lavished chiefly for his neglect of semantics.

Sampsnn believes that our capacity fur semantic innovation is proof that the human mind, like the divine, is able "to create ex *nihilo*". This remarkable gift is what the author means by "making sense", and it brings us to the central paradox of his work: that while he claims to defend a naturalistic theory of language, he already has an idealist theory of mind. He naively posits e mysterious "creative faculty" "the joint gift of evolution and providence—of which language is a mere tool and not the indispensable precondition. But the great insight of the genuine naturalistic tradition, from the Greeks down to Pavlov, was that language developed quite naturally out of more primitive forms of sign-response and signalling behaviour, observable in animals and human infants, to become an essential constitutive factor in the development of "those other faculties which seem proper to man only" (Hobbes); "that common sense, intelligence, reason, and *their opposites*, spring all from the same source" which is ultimately "the use we make of language" (Condillac); "that language comes first and thought follows in its footsteps" (Russell, in Parlerian vein; the late Frege said very much the same thing).

How this evolutionary marvel came about they never quite explained, but to explain just that must clearly be the first task of any theorist who claims to present a naturalistic theory of language. Sampson's initial advantage over Chomsky was indeed his wish to arrive at just such a non-metaphysical, evolutionary theory of language. (Chomsky, by contrast, follows Wittgenstein not only into "deep grammar" but also in refusing to have any truck with evolutionary explanations.) But then Sampson splits language down the middle. Syntax and grammar, he allows, can be "just as much e predictive science as can a theory in physics" (sic); but semantics, he thinks, has to do with creativity, is unpredictable, subject to no laws. All this betrays incomprehension both of the empirical nature of physical science and of the symbolic nature of language (in all its aspects). For surely the purpose of semantic theory is not the ludicrous one of predicting what everybody is going to say next, but that of explaining what meaning is; how words come to have meaning, and, above all, how this linguistic meaning differs from other kinds: whether pre-linguistic, as in animal sign-perception and signalling; or post-linguistic, as in any activity or symbolism—mathematics, science, theory, and indeed the totality of human culture—which involves or presupposes language, and would be impossible without it. Nor is it possible to separate syntax from semantics, since syntax is integral to language which is semantic by definition.

Sampson, then, is in error in agreeing with Chomsky that syntax is e part of empirical science, and also in maintaining that semantics is beyond formal theoretical analysis. He is also wrong in suppose that empirical science alone admits of rational theory. Einstein explicitly stressed the continuity between scientific thought and the "much more difficult problem of analysing the nature of everyday thinking" (*Ideas and Opinions*, p 290). There is an hope of this "more difficult problem" being solved outside the context of a comprehensive theory of language.

Sampsnn is unhappy in his choice of allies and memors and in the use he makes of them. He defends an evolutionary view of the emergence of language, but his mentor is not so much Darwin as H. A. Simon, a computer expert whose generous vision embraces all things from the bonding of atoms to the collapse of empires. Sampson draws heavily on Simon to lobour valid but obvious points, but fails to note that Simon's "model of man" as e "serially organized information processing system" is very close to that of his former MIT colleague, Chomsky, with whom Simon tells us he has cordial relations since the theories of both "rest conceptually on the same view of the human mind" (*The Sciences of the Artificial*, p 47).

Again, Sampsnn invokes Popper as master in both political theory and epistemology. Yet in *Unended Quest* (p 189) Popper blumly states that he himself does "not think highly of the theoretical or explanatory power of the theory of evolution", preferring his own quaint three-world system of physical phenomena, minds, and symbolically encoded "objective knowledge"—which never quite link up. Even this, however, is neglected by Sampsnn, who insists on treating the symbolic as though it were empirical, and absurdly puts linguistics (or rather one half of it) on the same footing as physical science: this in epite of his own quotation from Humboldt to the effect that language is not a thing or e product but an activity. "It is indeed e uniquely human form of activity, the effects of which are inextricably intertwined with all behaviour and thought which is distinctively human."

Perhaps the most distressing thing about modern linguists is the way they underestimate or misrepresent the importance and function of language, even as they elevate their discipline to pseudo-scientific status. The final conclusion of Sampsnn's book coincides with Harris's central thesis: that linguistics must abandon all hope of providing a general theory of language which might afford insight into human intelligence. (Thereafter they differ in that Sampsno wishes to revert to a merely descriptive linguistics.)

Chomsky, arguing to the contrary, but with a bad theory, certainly does not help matters. Nevertheless, it must be folly to deny the need for a theory that would clarify the related problems of symbolic utterance, its origin, function and development; meaning and interpretation; reference and modality; how language relates to reality and how it does not; theoretical discourse; and the like.

For these—and not the formal conventions of English and French, Eskimo and Kwakiutl—are the real problems of language theory; and language theory matters because language is the great divide between mere awareness and intelligence (which we also possess) and that larger consciousness which we call mind or reason (which we alone possess, thanks to language). Language alone enables us to categorize, analyse, coordinate and somehow stabilize our fleeting experiences, to recall and theorize about them, to imagine and devise new possibilities of thought and action, to compare hypothetical alternatives and to make rational choices. It is not merely the forms of a given language that each must learn, but the uses of language; any language. These alone are universal, and for perfectly obvious reasons.

So also, alas, are its misuses: whether these be wilful; or—more insidious and infinitely more common—the logical errors into which we unwittingly fall, and which so easily and disastrously affect not only our individual lives but also the course of human history; for men act upon their beliefs, whether these be rational or absurd. Hence until we fully understand the role of language in our mental make-up we are condemned to a risk of being caught in our own trap, without even knowing it. Quine has well stressed the futility of any epistemology not based on a naturalistic psychology, but equally hopeless is any psychology which is ignorant of the role of language in human thought, and subsequent action.

Human language—to speak of any other kind is an abuse of metaphor—is, then, the crucial factor in human continuity; but its unwitting misuse and misapprehension are, by the same token, major sources of irrationality also, as Condillac believed he was the first to see: "personne, que je sache, ne l'a connu avant moi". Without language there could be no myth, no metaphysics, no conflicting ideologies, all of which played an important role in man's first gropings in the direction of systematic thinking, but now serve only to pervert the rational solution of human problems: no longer, to be sure, in the natural sciences, but in the humanities; that is, in all areas of study concerned with the education, welfare, and now even the very survival of the human race.

If only to discover the important difference between reason and unreason in non-technical fields, our need for a sane, comprehensive theory of language, in an evolutionary perspective, is today more pressing than ever. Such a theory must include, indeed culminate on, a theory of rational discourse. For logic, no less than epistemology, must remain a shadowy area until it is seen as at once the hygiene and the pathology of our uses of language, and all that follows therefrom. (The modern use of the word "logic" in mathematics and electronics is here a total irrelevance; so also, alas, is much that passes for logic in the philosophy departments of the modern academy.) Without such a theory we are left defenceless in the face of all manner of sophistry, chicanery, rhetorical manipulation, and the general chaos of modern thought: including of course sociobiology, the old Social Darwinism of Spencer, Sumner, and Ardrey like Lorenz, who in 1943 recommended, on purely scientific grounds, "the extermination of the dregs of society", but later became academically respectable for his work with geese and his book on aggression. The reflection *of absurdum* of sociobiology as a theory of human behaviour is briefly stated: It is that while claiming to be an evolutionary doctrine it utterly fails to take note of the distinctive evolution of man.

To remedy this state of affairs we need, not a theory of man, but a rational anthropology, which clearly must include an evolutionary theory of language and mind. Such a theory must achieve with, and illumine, what we already know about evolution, behaviour, and intelligence, both animal and human. Only such an approach could make good the deficiencies of present evolution theory, so that at long last it will be able to accommodate human intelligence: without reducing it to a mindless behaviorism; or making it a deliverance of "deep grammar", a "serially organized information processing system", or (in sheer desperat) a mutation from on high with the gift of creation ex *nihilo*. There is little hope of any such theory coming from academic linguistics as practised today.

Tibetan treasure-texts

By Michael Aris

ARIANE SPANIEN and YOSHIRO IMAEDA (Editors):

Choix de documents tibétains conservés à la Bibliothèque Nationale complété par quelques manuscrits de l'India Office et du British Museum. Volume I, 26pp, 304 plates. Volume II, 32pp, 300 plates. Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale.

2 7177 1416 2

"The sight of the small room disclosed was one to make my eyes open wide. Heaped up in layers, but without any order, there appeared in the dim light of the priest's little lamp a solid mass of manuscript bundles rising to a height of nearly ten feet, and filling, as subsequent measurement showed, close on 500 cubic feet. The area left clear within the room was just sufficient for two people to stand in." Thus, in his *Ruins of Desert Cathay* (a fine reprint of which is available from La Haule Books, Jersey), did Sir Aurel Stein describe his first sight in 1906 of the huge polyglot library at Dunhuang. Being ignorant of Tibetan he could not have foreseen the impact his magnificent discovery was to have on the rise and development of Tibetan studies. It was left to the great Paul Pelliot, who followed him to Dunhuang a few months later, to exploit what he could of the "deposit of sacred waste," with his discerning eye and knowledge of Tibetan and Chinese. Even Pelliot, however, may not have fully realized how his "despoliation of Chinese national treasures" would in the end contribute far more to our knowledge of early Tibet than to altering the received picture of Chinese history and society.

The reasons for this somewhat ironical situation are clear. The Tibetans took possession of Dunhuang in c 782 and retained it till 848, during which period a centre for the translating, copying and diffusing of Buddhist texts was established there, probably on the model of a previous Chinese centre of that sort. Canonical scriptures therefore predominate in the collection, but alongside the endless copies of the *Aparimitāyurnāma sūtra* and *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra* are also found hundreds of unique items which serve to illuminate the conceptual structure and inner workings of the religious and political institutions of dynastic Tibet in the seventh to ninth centuries. Apart from these documents and the evidence contained in pillar inscriptions and the T'ang annals, the study of Tibetan history for this most crucial of periods rests largely on the somewhat doubtful testimony of much later Tibetan chroniclers whose exclusive concern was, with rare exceptions, the glorification of Buddhism. There are severe problems in reading archaic Tibetan in an unfixed orthography, much of it scribbled by careless scribes; but the effort has been amply rewarded.

About two dozen European, Japanese and Chinese scholars have occupied themselves in deciphering, editing, and commenting on the most interesting of these texts during the last seventy years or so since their discovery. The great centre for Dunhuang studies has been in Paris, where Pelliot's collection is kept at the Bibliothèque Nationale. The English contribution has naturally focused on the Tibetan texts in the Stein collections of the British Museum and the India Office Library, and has been mainly associated with the names of R. E. Emmerick, H. E. Richardson, W. Simon and F. W. Thomas. Fortunately, the English Channel has not proved to be a barrier to the unified study of the documents; indeed, fragments of some of the same manuscripts are found both in Paris and London, most notably the invaluable royal annals covering the years 644 to 763. Thanks to the immense labours of Marcelle Lalou, Louis de la Vallée Poussin and F. W. Thomas, the contents of the collections are documented and accessible, but their fixed and archival nature has hitherto made it difficult for scholars outside London or Paris to study them.

The first step towards remedying this has now been taken with the publication of these two portfolios containing a selection of the choicest manuscripts in the Fonds Pelliot tibétain; the two volumes present some 162 manuscripts out of a total of more than 2,500 in Paris, with a further six from London. To date only half of those included have received critical attention of any sort. So good are the facsimile photographs that it is almost easier to read the texts in this condition than in the fragile original, passages in red excepted. The items follow the order of Lalou's catalogue and are grouped and further subdivided in the introductory brochures under the following headings: Art, History and Geography, Language, Literature, Religions, Sciences and Techniques, Society. Ariane Macdonald (now known as Ariane Spanien) and Yoshiro Imaeda put the selection together in consultation with a team of their colleagues in Paris. Future generations of Dunhuang scholars will have a great deal to thank them for.

At least one Japanese scholar has decried the "treasure-seeking" characteristic of Dunhuang studies, or that common tendency to focus on individual texts which militates against a reconstruction of the library as a whole. Similarly, R.-A. Stein points out in his preface that the study of Tibetan palaeography which these documents permit has yet to begin. So varied and diffuse is the material, however, that in my estimation few will forego the continuing temptation to look for their own *trouvailles*. The ethos of discovery and rediscovery which continues to give Tibetan studies their special attraction after the closing of the political frontiers has received even greater impetus in recent years from the facsimile publication in the back streets of Old Delhi of thousands of Tibetan texts brought out by Tibetan refugees since 1959, or unearthed in the Himalayan kingdoms and districts by scholars, both local and foreign.

A large proportion of these books are themselves *gter-ma*, literally "treasure-texts": many of the doctrinal, liturgical and historical writings of the "Old Order" of the rNying-ma-pa School are claimed to have been hidden in the eighth century, mainly by the Indian sage Padmasambhava, and gradually revealed after the restoration of Buddhism in the eleventh century by professional "text-discoverers" (*gter-ston*). The contrasts and nuances between this later corpus and the "genuine" texts of Dunhuang will doubtless continue to occupy Western scholars for years to come.

Just as promising will be the effects of the Paris and London collections on traditional Tibetan historiography, still a lively field among lettered expatriates. A true story tells how, not long ago, one of the editors of these volumes introduced an aged and celebrated Tibetan scholar-sage to a certain text in the Pelliot collection (PT 44, reproduced here) which deals with the origins of the important Vajrakīla cycle; recognizing it as a true *gter-ma* the Tibetan proceeded to bestow its "authorization" fortissimo on his accompanying disciples, to the great consternation of other readers in the Bibliothèque Nationale. Alluring, too, are the prospects of the Chinese eventually rediscovering and "authorizing" the thousands of Tibetan texts left behind at Dunhuang after Western "despoliation". The provincial government of Gansu is reliably said to have tried to secure them in 1919, and that was the last to be heard of them. If they still survive, they almost certainly exceed in number those in all the European collections.

Taklamakan's sands

By Elizabeth Monroe

PETER HOPKIRK:

Foreign Devils on the Silk Road
The Search for the Lost Cities and Treasures of Chinese Central Asia
252pp. John Murray. £9.50.
0 7195 3738 X

There are two tales worth telling about the Silk Road that ran from North China through Central Asia to Syria and beyond. One is the saga of the silk by the bale or hank for which rich Romans, in their imperial heyday, were ready to pay its weight in gold. The other is the story of the middle section of the road, travelling eastwards, which was lost for centuries and rediscovered only in our own time. Evidence suggests that this section had a more important role in the spread of Buddhism from India into China than in the silk trade.

The first story was told by a Frenchman, Luce Boulnois, in a book called *The Silk Road* (reviewed in the *TLS*, July 16, 1967). Boulnois wrote not merely of the land route, but of the expedients adopted by the Chinese to send silk by sea to evade the greed of middlemen—Parthians, Sassanids, Palmyrenes. No single trader carried the silk the whole way, so its price swelled to exorbitant dimensions first at the hands of countless intermediaries, then at those of tariff-collectors, and finally through insurance against hazards such as storm, banditry and piracy. Boulnois also described the breaking of a Chinese secret that had lasted for 2,000 years; it was broken when the Emperor Justinian, tiring of extortion, sent two monks who knew the ropes all the way back to China to bring him silkworm eggs. This they did in hollow staves, and before long looms were flourishing in Syria and Cos and, later, Italy, Lyons and, ultimately, Spitalfields.

Peter Hopkirk's story is more modern. He tells of the rediscovery in the second half of the nineteenth century, and then in our own century, of the land route's middle section—the desert route that had been China's original choice. Sometimes by chance and sometimes with intent, the central Asian road was unearthed, and Hopkirk shows how Buddhism and its handmaid—Greco-Buddhist or Serindian art—were transported across areas once active and fortified, but later desolate and abandoned.

The eastern end of the route was at Chang-an (modern Sian) in the Hwang-ho basin. From there it struck north-west to Yumen Kuan (the Jade Gate) and went to a town called Ansi. Before that, travellers often paused at a monastery complex called Tun-Huang to pray for safety. For beyond Ansi lay the terrifying Taklamakan desert, and here the road split into two to avoid it. A northern route skirted the Tien-Shan mountains, a southern one, sticking to the fringe of the Tibetan mountains, passed Khotan and Yarkand. Both routes met again at Kashgar.

Both roads were bone-strewn, obliterated by sandstorms, and exposed to earthquakes, bandits, and, some said, djinns. But the proceeds of the silk trade were worth these alarming risks, and the route flourished from about AD150, when China and Rome first heard of one another, until the Middle Ages.

Hopkirk concentrates on the period when three empires were penetrating into these eerie deserts to watch one another's forward moves and to play the Great Game. By the last half of the nineteenth century, the Russians, the British and the Chinese all had spies in the area. Some were primarily explorers, like Russia's Prejevalsky; others were geographers, like Britain's Forsyth and Younghusband; some were scientists like Sweden's Sven Hedin. All stumbled on relics of former civilizations, some of them in the central desert, which must have been better watered in ancient times than now. Local inhabitants sold them coins and figurines, and even bricks that turned out to be drinkable tea. Some came across Buddhist stupas, and a few Nestorian churches. All found local peasants picking treasures to bits because of the suspected quality of their manure.

The first man to tackle the challenge of the Taklamakan sands was Sven Hedin, who more than once nearly died of thirst. The first professional investigator of their buried treasure was Sir Aurel Stein, orientalist turned archaeologist-explorer whom Hopkirk properly dubs "the giant of Central Asian archaeology".

Stein, born Hungarian, became British by education and choice, and had taken employment with the Government of India. But for Curzon's interest in Central Asia, his furloughs would perhaps have been so long, or so rewarding, but he was ready to endure the Taklamakan's arctic winters and broiling summers to prove his theories. His first journey in 1900 unearthed three or four cities near its southern route, and fortified his belief in its hidden treasures; these outposts were rich in Ghandaran murals and manuscripts, some of which he could read, and others of which he could not recognize. Most were in mint condition, for the Taklamakan sands are as dry as Egypt's.

Stein's biggest handicap was that he did not know Chinese. For his longest journey, which went deep into China, he therefore equipped himself with a delightful Chinese helper, Chiang. Together they followed the Great Wall far to the west, to where it was believed to have ended. They explored the great complex of caves at Dunhuang, where, thanks to Chiang's diplomacy and Stein's tenacity, they reached the zenith of their quest. First they were able to buy a few manuscripts. Then they noticed a freshly bricked-up wall behind which were said to lie manuscripts. At last, partly by charm and partly by guile, they were able to suborn the abbot to look inside. The sight that met their eyes was almost as surprising as that which met Lord Carnarvon.

Inside lay bundle on bundle of rolled-up manuscripts—in all, [illegible] hundred cubic feet of them. At first they were only permitted to take one or two, smuggled out by the abbot at night under his gown. By the end, they were looking at as many as time permitted, and among them they found the Diamond Sutra, the oldest printed book in the world, which is now one of the prizes of the British Museum. They could scarcely stagger away under their booty. One of Stein's photographs shows ponies, yaks and camels borne down under the load of spoil.

Naturally, Stein's finds whetted other appetites. Russians were already at work in the north, but in 1904 Germans, in 1906 French and in 1908 Japanese were all at work helping themselves to treasures for despatch to their national museums. Some were literally hacked from walls; much had to be left as being too heavy or too friable to move, but an enormous amount was taken.

Mr Hopkirk, who has written a highly readable and elegant book, has done so with a genius for compression that enables him to fit the whole into 250 pages. He has also, as a roving correspondent for *The Times*, seen for himself a great many of the treasures that he describes. Yet his book, though the story of a triumph, ends on a note that some will find poignant. Today the finds lie in eight or ten museums all over the world. Some displays do them justice, and at least they are accessible, as well as preserved from the pencils of vandal scribblers. But others do not. Do they not wake a qualm in those who know that they are, in Sir Eric Teichman's words, "lost to China for ever"? The word in Chinese for Stein and his fellow purloiners is "thieves".

Pioneers' Scrapbook: Reminiscences of Kenya 1890 to 1968, edited by Elspeth Huxley and Arnold Curtis (160pp. Evans Brothers. £8.50) is a selection from twenty-two distinct scrapbooks compiled by members of the East African Women's League to celebrate its golden jubilee in 1967. Begun as a welfare organization the League also quickly achieved its aim of votes for women in what was then the East Africa Protectorate. The book is a memorable mosaic of small incidents and colonial "characters": the Rev and Mrs Leakey travelling [illegible] miles "on foot and by hammock" with their two baby daughters to Kabete where later Louis Leakey was born; Mrs Hudson Caine, diminutive and clearly indomitable beneath a vast pith helmet, directing a team of lethargic-looking road-builders; Kenya's first Rugby match, played at Thika in 1923 only after the rhino found on the field that morning had been shot.

In the conqueror's hoof-prints

By David Hunt

JOHN URE:

The Trail of Tamerlane
247pp. Constable. £7.95.
0 09 463350 9

John Ure, a member of the Diplomatic Service since 1956 and now Ambassador in Havana, admits to a passion for "travelling uncomfortably in remote places". He also likes reading and writing about it afterwards in comfort. This is the perfect combination for the writer of a travel book, since the author has his own fun and then communicates it to the reader.

The travel-book is a genre in which the British have long excelled. It may be that it is now on the wane since television brings an instant apprehension of even the most exotic parts of the world without any risk of exposure to what Byron called "the blight of life—the demon 'Thought'". Pure description is out, faced with the competition of pictures. A theme is needed. Ure showed himself aware of this in his earlier travel-book, *Cucumber Sandwiches in the Andes* (*TLS*, November 2, 1973).

His theme there was the crossing on horseback of the famous Puna de los Patos on the trail of Generals San Martín and O'Higgins when they brought their army across it in 1817 to liberate Chile from the Spaniards. In this second book he has chosen to follow in the [illegible] but better known as Tamerlane or Timur-i-Lang, the great Mongol conqueror. It would not have been possible even with the utmost indulgence of the Diplomatic Service to take enough leave to cover all the ground that was devastated by that scourge of humanity, from the Aegean to the borders of China and down to Delhi; and so it was decided to follow as closely as possible the course of his campaigns of 1386 to 1388, when Tamerlane set out from Samarkand to punish Toktamish, Khan of the Golden Horde, for his effrontery in seizing and sacking Tabriz, which he had just decided to sack himself.

John Ure and his wife Caroline started from Tehran. Their route lay first through north-western Iran, then into eastern Turkey and then back again into Iran to sweep through Kurdistan and Luristan to Isfahan and Shiraz, for part of the time travelling with the Qashqai tribe on their migration. Beginning on an air-conditioned bus, before long they are making their way to the Valley of the Assassins and across the Elburz mountains on foot.

It is thus early that the reader gets evidence of the author's skill in combining topographical description with accurate historical narration. Admittedly it would be difficult to write anything about the head of the assassins, the founder of the Ismaili sect, the Old Man of the Mountain, Hassan ibn al-Sabbah, without stirring the imagination. He was the man who first thought of putting pot to the purpose of inspiring his followers to go abroad and liquidate people of whom he disapproved, which sounds rather modern. His direct successors, however, bearing the title of Aga Khan, have become respected pillars of the establishment both in Britain and overseas. The rock of Alamut, his impregnable stronghold, is the theme of one of Ure's most vivid and suggestive descriptions.

There are plenty of other romantic cities in the Ures' itinerary: Tabriz and Erzurum and Diyarbakir, Isfahan and Shiraz. The style of the narrative is measured but evocative; a little throw-away, a little affected by the insidious influence of Peter Fleming, but solidly buttressed by a personal perspicacity of description and by a constant reference back to earlier authorities.

For Ure is interested in and respectful towards his predecessors who have trod the same path. His constant quotations from them enliven his book; and I must confess I never realized how aptly line after line from Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* could be used to illuminate the course of the campaigns here traced. The poetry is both a constant delight and also conforms with the historical focus.

The date of the journey is not explicitly given but it was shortly before the Iranian revolution. So it is a journey in time as well as in space. The Ures' encounters with Kurds and Azerbaijanis give no hint of the explosion to come, of the overthrow of the Shah and the collapse of authority. Whether the minority peoples wish for and can achieve the dissolution of the Persian Empire—

And cast the kingdoms old
Into another mould—

is the main geopolitical question of the 1980s.

The First Lady's lady-friend

By Kenneth S. Lynn

DORIS FABER:

The Life of Lorena Hickok, E.R.'s Friend
384pp. New York: William Morrow. $12.95.

Lorena Hickok, who when a child was beaten and raped by her father and who as a young woman came to love Eleanor Roosevelt with a passionate intensity, was often jealous and resentful of the young men whom Mrs Roosevelt gathered around her in the later years of her life. Miss Hickok seems to have particularly disliked the writer Joseph P. Lash. Thus when Mrs Roosevelt died in 1962 and Lash undertook to write the story of her partnership with her husband, Miss Hickok denied him access to the letters she had exchanged with Mrs Roosevelt. "Good old Joe", she vowed, is not "going to get his hot little hands into my papers."

And now, from beyond the grave, Miss Hickok has succeeded in totally demolishing the credibility of Lash's argument in *Eleanor and Franklin* (1971) that in the wake of F.D.R.'s love affair with her own social secretary in the summer of 1917 Mrs Roosevelt realized "she could not achieve fulfillment through someone else", but that in the 1930s this "woman of sorrow" found a substitute satisfaction in rendering "a service of love to her stricken country". In the process of reducing Lash to trash, Miss Hickok has also disposed of Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr's contention that Mrs Roosevelt ultimately triumphed over her debilitating self-doubts through "a terrifying exertion of self-discipline" and an "incomparable and incessant self-control". For the Hickok-Roosevelt correspondence makes it clear that Mrs Roosevelt shed the low self-esteem which had afflicted her all of her life at precisely the moment in the early 1930s when she was at last receiving the unqualified love of another human being.

The intermediary through whom Miss Hickok has posthumously discredited the work of uncomprehending male historians is a former reporter for the *New York Times*, Doris Faber, who in the spring of 1978 accepted an assignment to write a brief life of Mrs Roosevelt. Arriving in Hyde Park, New York, to do research at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Mrs Faber discovered that only a few days before, as luck would have it, the papers of the late Lorena Hickok had at last been made available to scholars. The papers did not contain the full run of the Hickok-Roosevelt correspondence. Miss Hickok had attempted to reclaim from Mrs Roosevelt all of the letters she had written to her, but hundreds of them had apparently not been saved. Moreover, fifteen letters by Mrs Roosevelt which originally had been deposited with the papers had subsequently been removed and burnt by Miss Hickok, after she had decided on second thoughts that they were too indiscreet to be seen by others. Additional letters by Mrs Roosevelt which were found in Miss Hickok's apartment after her death by a member of her family had also been destroyed, for reasons that remain unclear. Yet for all their lacunae, the papers included the impressive total of 3,360 letters, of which 2,336 were by Mrs Roosevelt. The bulk of the letters had been written in the 1930s, and the first of them dated from the autumn of 1932, shortly before the presidential election which would thrust a painfully insecure and ungainly woman into a role she contemplated with horror.

The sheer bulk of the Hickok-Roosevelt correspondence startled Mrs Faber, especially after it became apparent to her that the two women had supplemented their torrential letter-writing with almost-nightly telephone calls. But what was far more startling to Mrs Faber was the gushily romantic language of the letters, and her first reaction to the nature of the relationship which that language implied was to attempt to have the Hickok papers sealed up again until at least the year 2000. When this proved impossible, she decided that she simply could not walk away from a biographical discovery of such magnitude. She would turn the papers into a book. If Miss Hickok had had foreknowledge of the fact that the time-bomb she had placed in the F.D.R. Library would eventually be detonated by another woman, it surely would have warmed her lonely heart.

The relationship of Mrs Roosevelt and Miss Hickok began on a summer morning in 1932. While waiting to learn whether the Democratic convention in Chicago had nominated her husband for president, the wife of the governor of the state of New York invited two reporters from the Associated Press to have breakfast with her in the Executive Mansion in Albany. As they left the Mansion a short time later, one of the reporters turned to the other and said, "That woman is unhappy about something". The speaker was Lorena Hickok, who knew something about unhappiness herself.

As a child in the Upper Middle West, Miss Hickok had conceived a bitter scorn for her mother and an implacable hatred of her father. "I kept wondering all through those childhood years", she later recalled, "why my mother, who was . . . just as big as my father, let him do the things he did." A man of maniacal temper, Hickok was incapable of holding on to any sort of job for long, and as he hauled his family from one scruffy town to the next in quest of new employment, he took out his rage in extraordinary acts of aggression against the members of his household. One day, for instance, he became angry at the sight of his small daughter biting her finger nails. Grabbing Lorena's hands, ". . . he thrust the tips of my fingers into my mouth, and made me bite on them, holding my jaws together with his big, strong hands, until the tears rolled down my cheeks". Soon, he began to whip and beat her, sometimes going after her with a stave out of a butter keg. On one occasion when Mrs Hickok protested that he might kill Lorena, he hurled a chair at his spouse by way of reply. By the time Lorena was fourteen, her father had sexually violated her and her mother was dead. That the woman with whom Mr Hickok had taken up shortly decided to send Lorena out into the world as a hired girl in a succession of other people's homes was in one sense another act of cruelty; yet it was also a great blessing for the child to be free at last of her father's sadistic grip. Years later, when Miss Hickok was informed that he had committed suicide and she was asked to contribute money for funeral expenses, her reply was, "Send him to the glue factory!"

In 1918, eleven years after starting work as a maid, Lorena Hickok had metamorphosed into a star reporter for the *Minneapolis Tribune*. A big, bluff and hearty woman, she was very much "one of the boys" in the newspaper's city room. While continuing to work for the *Tribune*, Lorena also enrolled as a freshman at the University of Minnesota, where her powerhouse manner and appearance soon caught the attention of a small-statured, extremely shy, superlatively wealthy young woman, two years her senior, named Ella Moree, who was dabbling with English courses at the university and trying to write poetry. Almost immediately the two young women decided to take an apartment together in the swank Leamington Hotel, Ella having offered to pay the bills. For eight years they were inseparable. Then in 1926 they moved to San Francisco, where Lorena intended to write novels. But while Lorena sat at home, cursing her lack of imagination and crumpling page after page, Ella renewed her acquaintance with a widower whom she had known years before. They eloped to Arizona, and Lorena was crushed. When she renewed her newspaper career in New York a short time later, she had no expectation of ever falling in love again.

Eleanor Roosevelt's mother, like Lorena Hickok's mother, was named Anna. That fact may have been the only exact similarity between their lives which the two women discovered during their long talks together in the fall of 1932, talks which had been made possible by Miss Hickok's suggestion to the Associated Press that she should be allowed to cover the activities of the wife of the Democratic candidate for president. Yet if Mrs Roosevelt's experiences had been very different from Miss Hickok's, she, too, had known heartbreak, early and late. In its own genteel way, the marriage of her parents had been as thoroughgoing a disaster as the union of Mr and Mrs Hickok. Eleanor's father was an attractive but indolent man whose excessive drinking so offended his coldly proper wife that after several tense years she all but banished him from her sight. Only sporadically did Eleanor see the father whom she adored after she grew beyond infancy, and when she did see him, his attention to her was so erratic that she felt even more unsure of his love. Before her tenth birthday he was dead: the fantasy that he would some day desert her for ever was now fulfilled. In her grief the child was unable to turn to anyone, for her mother, too, was dead, while the grandmother into whose care she had been delivered was a woman of storybook strictness who had no interest in consolation. The orphan, to be sure, had aunts, but their idea of establishing rapport with their niece was to call her "the ugly duckling".

From the day of her wedding to Franklin Roosevelt, Eleanor received further disparagement from a domineering and possessive mother-in-law, whose side was often taken by her son. In the course of the next dozen years, Eleanor found further reason for distrusting herself in her manifest ineptitude as a mother. Then in 1918 she learnt of her husband's sexual liaison with Lucy Mercer. Once again, Eleanor Roosevelt had not been able to hold the attention of a man she loved. During the 1920s, Mrs Roosevelt increasingly sought out the company of women friends, two of whom may have been lesbians. Whether consciously or unconsciously, she seemed to be looking for a new kind of love life, but in any event she did not find it, and her sense of personal inadequacy did not abate. In contrast to the tough and self-assured Lorena Hickok, who in spite of her emotional wounds rebuilt her journalistic career to the point where she was considered one of the top wire-service reporters in the country, Mrs Roosevelt was so shy and nervous that she even doubted her ability to discharge the ceremonial duties of a politician's wife. Thus on the day of the presidential nomination speeches at the Democratic convention in 1932, she sent a letter to two friends, in which she poured out her anguish. She simply "could not live" in the White House, she exclaimed. Shortly thereafter, she had breakfast with two reporters from the Associated Press, one of whom spotted her unhappiness. Because the reporter was herself unhappy, she felt drawn to Mrs Roosevelt and resolved to re-arrange her journalistic schedule so as to see her again. The transformation of a doubt-scarred ugly duckling into the most admired woman of her time was about to begin.

By the time Franklin Roosevelt was inaugurated president on March 4, 1933, his wife and Miss Hickok were deliriously in love. "Hick darling, All day I've thought of you & another birthday I will be with you . . . Oh! I want to put my arms around you, I ache to hold you close. Your ring is a great comfort. I look at it & I think she does love me or I wouldn't be wearing it!" (ER to LH, March 7, 1933.) "Just telephoned you. Oh! It is good to hear your voice, when it sounds right no one can make me so happy." (ER to LH, March 8, 1933.) "My pictures are nearly all up & I have you in my sitting room where I can look at you most of my waking hours! I can't kiss you so I kiss your picture good-night and good morning!" (ER to LH, March 9, 1933.) "I've been trying today to bring back your face—to remember just *how* you look. . . . Most clearly I remember your eyes, with a kind of teasing smile in them, and the feeling of that soft spot just northeast of the corner of your mouth against my lips: I wonder what we'll do when we meet—what we'll say. Well—I'm rather proud of us, aren't you? I think we've done rather well." (LH to ER, December 5, 1933.) "I wish I could lie down beside you tonight & take you in my arms." (ER to LH, September 1, 1934.)

Did Lorena Hickok initiate Eleanor Roosevelt into the pleasures of Sapphic sex? As the two women lay entwined in one another's arms, were orifices penetrated, were orgasms achieved? In *The Life of Lorena Hickok, E. R.'s Friend*, Doris Faber cannot bring herself to formulate these questions explicitly; nevertheless, she is mesmerized by them, and with many a blush and embarrassed gulp she keeps returning to euphemistic versions of them throughout her book. Whether out of honest conviction or out of fear of angering the priestly guardians of Rooseveltian memory, she repeatedly rejects the idea that the answers to those questions could possibly be yes. Yet almost every time she does, she tacks on a highly ambivalent afterthought, as if she were trying to take the curse off a misrepresentation of what she really believes. What was the relationship, she asks, in her typically roundabout fashion, that was symbolized by the sapphire ring belonging to Lorena Hickok that Eleanor Roosevelt proudly wore? Until recently, Mrs Faber answers,

> it would have been all but unthinkable to raise such a question involving a woman of Eleanor Roosevelt's stature. Indeed that word—*unthinkable*!—was the reaction of the senior archivists at Hyde Park when they first scanned the Papers of Lorena Hickok. To them, the effusively affectionate passages in numerous letters were the expression of just an intense, if unusually belated schoolgirl crush. At least with regard to E. R. herself, this verdict is, I believe, essentially justified. The preponderance of the evidence, and the total context of her life, does support it. Nevertheless, there undoubtedly were nuances of less naiveté in her relationship with Hick; their correspondence contains dozens of passages that offer some grounds for such an assumption.

Strikingly absent from this tenuous piece of analysis is any acknowledgement of how passionate the letters are, or any consideration of the question whether Lorena Hickok was sexually importunate. Mrs Faber says that the archivists' verdict of schoolgirlish innocence is justified "with regard to E. R. herself" and leaves it to the reader to wonder whether L. H. would have been satisfied with exploring the soft spot northeast of her lover's mouth.

What is most unfortunate, however, about Mrs Faber's obsessive concern with "Did they or didn't they?" is not her unwillingness to pursue the question as hard as she might have, but rather her certainty that no other issue is more important. Only fleetingly does she give evidence of realizing that the great interest of the Hickok-Roosevelt correspondence consists in its revelation of how Eleanor Roosevelt broke free of a lifetime of self-doubt. In the aftermath of her husband's electoral victory in November 1932, Mrs Roosevelt quietly observed in an interview with a woman reporter with whom she had recently established a clandestine relationship: "For him I am deeply and sincerely glad. I would not have had it go otherwise. And now I shall start to work on my own salvation. . . ." In those softly spoken words one can already hear a new sound of confidence and determination, and if one pays attention to the tone of Mrs Roosevelt's voice in the letters written to Miss Hickok across the next two years, one can hear an ever stronger note of self-confidence, swelling triumphantly out of her odes to joy. The more pages Mrs Roosevelt fills with protestations of how much her secret private life has come to mean to her, the more pages she devotes to telling Miss Hickok about her rapidly expanding public life. The Hickok-Roosevelt correspondence not only chronicles a love affair, it traces the emergence of the most active First Lady in American history.

Mrs Roosevelt focused her newly developed political assurance on the alleviation of human misery. That development, too, has a vital connection to her relationship with Miss Hickok. As Henry James demonstrated in *The Bostonians* almost a century ago, the political reformer and the sexual deviant can sometimes be found at the same address. Olive Chancellor, the lesbian prota-

gonist of the novel, looks at the world from the point of view of a psychic outcast; her fierce opposition to the social status quo is the logical complement of her personal sense of marginality and alienation. Thus both Mrs Roosevelt and Miss Hickok were extraordinarily concerned with the suffering of poor Americans in the 1930s can be partially explained by the fact that Miss Hickok was forced to give up her newspaper career in order to continue her romance with Mrs Roosevelt, that she thereupon went to work for Harry Hopkins's Federal Emergency Relief Administration—which gave her detailed knowledge of the poor—and that she passed on everything she learnt to Mrs Roosevelt. Their exchanges on this subject, however, did not take place in a vacuum. They took place in the context of a love affair which the participants had to keep secret lest they be disgraced, and which had been built upon mutual confessions of victimization and despair. For reasons which Henry James would have had no trouble in understanding, the special nature of their relationship caused these women to be particularly attuned to the plight of the helpless victims of the Depression.

Because Miss Faber did not develop the significant implications of her subject, her book must be rated a failure. She does deserve appreciation, though, for a responsible presentation of the evidence she stumbled upon. Thanks to her, future historians will be able to write vastly more believable portraits of Eleanor Roosevelt than those we now have. Unfortunately, the most influential American reviewers of *E. R's Friend* have not acknowledged this fact. Indeed, the most influential of them all, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr, has done his best to bury the story of Lorena Hickok in an unmarked grave—as Miss Hickok, I suspect, knew long ago that he would.

For while Schlesinger is one of the most distinguished historians of our time, he is also the kindly loyal guardian of a pantheon of political heroes whose human failings he is prepared to defend at no matter what sacrifice of factual or psychological plausibility. As a historian, Schlesinger can be enormously impressive. His description, for instance, in *The Age of Roosevelt* of the permanent tension of New Deal policy makes sense of the subject at the same time that it does justice to his well-nigh fantastic complexity, whereas every other New Deal historian, including the awesomely assiduous Frank Freidel, has been defeated by the task. Schlesinger's recent essay in *The Journal of American History* on the intellectual shortcomings of the current generation of American intellectual historians is another example of his intellectual brilliance.

But whenever Schlesinger feels called upon to defend his heroes, he is apt to say very foolish things. One of his worst moments occurred in 1966, shortly after Jonathan Daniels published a memoir called *The Time Between the Wars*, which blew open the story of Franklin Roosevelt's relationship with Lucy Mercer. In an article he at once dashed off for the *Ladies' Home Journal*, Schlesinger did his best to hose down and wash away this serious blemish on the Roosevelt'an escutcheon. If Lorene Hickok happened to read the article, it must have given her several minutes of bitter merriment.

In Schlesinger's judgment, the story told by Daniels had "been wrested terribly out of proportion" by the press. We must remember, he said, that Franklin Roosevelt and Lucy Mercer were "reared in the last years of the Victorian era". There was a "Henry Jamesian drama of renunciation" which "reflects credit on everyone involved". Now, even if we ignore the fact that a good many of Henry James's novels and stories deal with extremely sordid examples of secret sex, this argument is nonsense. The liaison itself certainly did not reflect credit on Franklin Roosevelt and Lucy Mercer, and while the lovers eventually forsook their dalliances, there is no evidence that they did so for moral reasons which demand our admiration.

The idea that Franklin Roosevelt and Lucy Mercer were governed in their maturity by the moral code of their Victorian childhoods also makes no sense; their love affair was a product of the very different sensibilities of the First World War era.

Schlesinger looks even more foolish in the paragraphs in which he discusses Eleanor Roosevelt—or rather, in the paragraphs in which he avoids discussing Eleanor Roosevelt. Jonathan Daniels had maintained that Franklin's love affair "almost broke his marriage to Eleanor", and the tone of voice in which Schlesinger conveys Daniels's contention to his readers makes it plain that he does not agree with it. In a breathtaking understatement, Schlesinger acknowledges that when Franklin Roosevelt began to exhibit delight in having Lucy Mercer around, this "no doubt . . . worried Eleanor Roosevelt, as it would any wife". Having got this minimising admission off his chest, Schlesinger then proceeds to ignore Eleanor Roosevelt. The question of whether Franklin was going to divorce Eleanor and marry Lucy is examined by Schlesinger from Franklin's point of view and from Lucy's, but not from Eleanor's. The fact that Franklin and Lucy kept in touch over the years, that she was an invited guest at his first Inauguration, is acknowledged—and morally justified—by Schlesinger without any regard to how Eleanor might have felt. ("Oh, Arthur", I seem to hear Lorena Hickok saying, as she looks up from her copy of the *Ladies Home Journal*, "if you only knew what Eleanor and I were doing during those inaugural days when Franklin had the audacity to have Lucy Mercer at his side!").

Only towards the end of the article does Schlesinger take up Daniels's assertion that Eleanor was "bitter and jealous of Lucy" through all the years when Lucy was out in the Franklin's guest in the White House, or at Warm Springs, Georgia, or at Bernard Baruch's South Carolina plantation. Schlesinger's reply to Daniels is the part of the article that Lorena Hickok would have liked best, I think. As to Eleanor's feelings, Schlesinger says: "How can anyone possibly know?"

Mrs Roosevelt certainly retained all her life a suspicion of stylish and, as she thought, frivolous ladies. But she was a woman of immense discipline, perception and wisdom. She understood that other women could supply something—some instinct for the gaiety and fun of life—which her husband needed and she could not give him.

Fun for Franklin, discipline for Eleanor.

But what is even more distressing than Schlesinger's total blindness to Eleanor Roosevelt's emotional needs is his failure to comprehend the story of Franklin Roosevelt's cheating on his wife costs light on his political behaviour. Instead of seeking to play down the story, Schlesinger should have used it to reach a fuller understanding than he has thus far displayed in his *Age of Roosevelt* volumes of the dark side of F. D. R.'s conduct in the White House. An airy duplicity, a brazen hypocrisy, were hallmarks of the Roosevelian presidency. Dangers at home and abroad may have necessitated such conduct, but the point is that F. D. R. was an instinctive deceiver and always had been. One also has to wonder whether the President, with his uncanny capacity for sensing what other people were thinking, came to suspect Eleanor of deceiving him with Lorena Hickok. A man in a wheel-chair might have had a particularly urgent desire to know for sure. Can it be that F. D. R's complicated relations with the FBI began with a request to J. Edgar Hoover in place his own wife under surveillance?

When the *New York Times* broke the news story that a biography of Lorena Hickok was about to be published, the indefatigable Schlesinger sprang to his typewriter once again. Forty-eight hours later the *Washington Post* carried his byline above a special article. "I could not care less" he began, "what Eleanor Roosevelt's sex life was like—but this very elderly lady which he had written showed that he cared very deeply. We have to remember, he continued, that Mrs Roosevelt was reared in the last years of the Victorian era, when women were apt to talk in a way that modern interpreters can easily misunderstand. It was the same sort of argument he had made in the *Ladies Home Journal* piece. A few months later Schlesinger reviewed *E. R's Friend* on the front page of the *New York Times Book Review*. I could not care less, he protested, what Mrs Roosevelt's sex life was like, but we have to remember that she was reared in the last years of the Victorian era.

The Napoleon of Standard Oil

By Alden Whitman

DAVID FREEMAN HAWKE:
John D.: the Founding Father of the Rockefellers
260pp. New York: Harper and Row. $12.95.
0 06 01181 3 X

In Gustavus Myers's memorable muckraking *History of Great American Fortunes*, published in 1909, there is, strangely, no chapter on John D Rockefeller, Sr, nor on the Standard Oil Trust, although both were among the favourite villains of turn-of-the-century political and economic reformers. Apart from mentioning that "the Standard Oil headquarters [in New York] was an inaccessible citadel of silence", he does not explain his omission; but he may well have felt that Ida Minerva Tarbell's explosive *History of the Standard Oil Company*, published in book form in 1904 from magazine articles that had appeared in 1902-3, was the final word on America's first finance capitalist and his oligopolist corporation.

Miss Tarbell was a vigorous writer. Her portrait of Rockefeller, Sr, and his colleagues was searing. Conceding their "almost preternatural skill" as businessmen, she excoriated them for using their talents to stifle competition, reap "usurious dividends" and to defraud and hoodwink the public. In later magazine articles and a book, Miss Tarbell called Rockefeller, Sr "the victim of a monomania which blinds him to every other consideration in life", including humanity and justice. He set, moreover, a bad example with his "commercial Machiavellism" by influencing others to get ahead by any means possible. Besides being cunning and ruthless, Miss Tarbell went on, he possessed a crabbed and miserly face and soul. It is perhaps understandable that when Rockefeller, Sr was asked to comment on her charges, he met his foe. "Not a word! Not a word about that miserable woman!" he exclaimed.

Miss Tarbell's unflattering picture of both Rockefeller, Sr and his company sank so deeply into the American consciousness that even Allan Nevins's more generous appreciation in his 1953 *Study in Power, John D. Rockefeller, Industrialist and Philanthropist* failed to dislodge it. Using the same material in the Rockefeller Archive Center that was made available to Professor Nevins, David Freeman Hawke, Professor of History at Lehman College of the City University of New York, has drawn a fresh Rockefeller, one that I suspect is much nearer the mark than Miss Tarbell's demon or Dr Nevins's archangel.

Concentrating on John D's first sixty years, roughly from 1839 to 1900, Professor Hawke paints a far from benign business figure, yet one who is quite understandable and very human. He carefully eschews the later Rockefeller, hairless (as a result of alopecia) and wizened, who gave away shiny pennies (he upped his benefaction to dimes in the 1920s) with his Sunday platitudes; and who was as openly the creature of family public relations men. What Professor Hawke provides, in short, is an unvarnished Rockefeller, who proves to be much more complex than either Miss Tarbell or Dr Nevins imagined.

The jacket portrait of John D conveys some of the ambiguities. It shows him at fifty-six the epitome of quiet fashion in high-laced shoes. He is sitting in a simple wooden chair, half-turned, his legs crossed, his delicate fingers interlaced; he is looking straight ahead, his dark eyes serenely purposeful. There is not a smile, not a glint of humour in his handsome unsmiling face. Nor, aside from a discreetly gleaming cuff-links, is there any ornamentation to suggest that he had calculated his net worth for 1895, the year of the oil painting, at $60,375,700.70.

That seventy cents is important. Professor Hawke assures us, because it testifies to Rockefeller's frugalness for exceptitude. From adolescence onwards he exulted in numbers; he kept a personal ledger, in which he "listed every cent he spent, including gifts to church and charity" to the day he died.

John D woo not penurious, but he did not practice frivolity either. When he was very, very old and very, very rich, he kept chickens on his Pocantico Hills estate in Westchester County, New York, to supply the family with eggs and meat; he sold the surplus "at a fair profit" to nearby villagers.

Rockefeller's business precepts were instilled by his father, William Avery, who lent money to his children at 10 per cent interest and taught them that sentiment had no place in commercial dealings. Big Bill, as the father was known, was a land speculator, cancer quack and bigamist, yet so affable that his sister-in-law regarded him as the best of fathers. Big Bill's flashy ways were painful to his family, yet some of his personality rubbed off on his son who could, Professor Hawke says, "charm the birds out of the trees" when he wanted to.

Gracious, he also possessed the persistence of one who was certain that he had led a godly Baptist life. As Mr Dooley remarked, "There's wan thing f'r'm what I can see, an' that is that Jawn D hasn't an idea that he I'er did wrong to anyone." Professor Hawke finds that certainly puzzling, "for on the corporate level John D . . . bought politicians, misled the public with spurious brand names, planted false stories in the press. He used every tactic overhanded, short of violence, to squeeze or starve into submission any man whose business he wanted".

One clue to the enigma, which Professor Hawke notes, was that John D's relationship to God was contractual. He considered contracts covenants, obligations to be kept with holy zeal in the very early New England sense.

Beyond Rockefeller's circle of piety, which insulated him much of the vituperation he showered on him, lay the world the Gilded Age, epitomized by Gould. Although Professor Hawke tells us that Rockefeller admired Gould, he neglects to point out the degree to which the Erie buccaneer served as an exemplar for John D; Gould was a more effective capitalist than Professor Hawke realizes.

Not only was John D an admirer of Gould, but he also saw Napoleon to the point of believing that he possessed some of the emperor's key qualities. He demonstrate no having "a great organization", adding, "I had what I have always regarded as a prime necessity for large success in any enterprise—that is a thorough understanding of men and the ability to inspire in them confidence in him; that is of equal importance, confidence in themselves".

This description ignores the qualities that led to people to follow John D, the qualities that put together the Standard Oil Trust, which by 1904 controlled ninety per cent of the oil industry in the United States. The corner that Nelson Bunker Hunt must regard with envy. The ruthlessness and financial acumen of Rockefeller one his foes acknowledged astounding; virtually every penny was generated in John D's business, which was so orderly as a result of features in a ledger. One of the merits of this book is the recital of how Rockefeller and associates achieved their world hold, establishing in the process the unlikely city of Cleveland, as the country's oil fuelled a Napoleonic coup.

Professor Hawke makes the sensible point that the Rockefellers unquestionably were simply a more enlightened business, a godly one. "Men ought to cooperate, not one another", he said. "Through cooperation all prosper and as they prosper the country would prosper." In light, according to Professor Hawke, Rockefeller was a Christian revolutionary. He thought it contravened common sense (and the higher law) to rebel against restraint of trade to insist that common carriers treat customers alike.

There is a good deal of irony in this biography, which the muckraker published three years before Standard Oil in 1911. The Department of Justice moved against his business, this was charade; the breakup only strengthened the Trust.

Professor Hawke is not a vituperative writer, but he is decidedly scandalo. His book is almost brief. It is a pity he confined the wonderful Cyrus Eaton story; not provide a more lively sense John D's times and did not use an Frederick T. Gates's report on Rockefeller's almoner. Nevertheless, these minutiae are more than compensated for by the accuracy of this thoughtful and needed modern portrait of America's first genius of business combination.

Classroom capers

By Richard Usborne

H. F. ELLIS:
A. J. Wentforth, BA
215pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson. £5.95.
0 297 77761 0

The "papers" of that old fool Wentworth, bachelor, for thirty-five years Maths master in Set IIIA at Burgrove prep-school, first appeared in *Punch* in 1938. This book collects episodes of confusion from two previous books of the *Punch* pieces: Wentworth at Burgrove, in the Army (Second-Lieut Wentworth, RA) in the war, back at Burgrove, in busy retirement in Hampshire, on trips to Switzerland and Italy shepherding two young brothers, and again at Burgrove as a donnat Temp. O dear, the changes! Inexcusable! A new master is hanging his gown on the peg that was Wentworth's. The headmaster is fat and has a new nickname. Burgrove has become an Inspected School. In Set IIIA boys now sit alphabetically, not in the order of last week's marks. And there's a festive young Mason in the form, son of that festive young Mason who, years ago . . . And father has told son all the stories about old Wentworth . . . following into the boot-basket, the pigeon in his desk . . .

Chalk in hie, finger-nails, with deep convictions about nibs, blotting paper, bicycle-clips (It is pulite . . . may, mandatory . . . to take them off before speaking to an equal or a superior), square brackets and the square on the hypotenuse, Wentworth opens doors into confusion. "I keep my bicycle in the tool-shed, together with the mowing machine and other odds and ends . . ." His attempt to clear out the tool-shed ends with him incognito in garden hose, meshed in a deck-chair and showered with old dahlia tubers just when a Miss Stephens arrives to ask him to join the Fenport Amateur Dramatic group to do a Priestley play.

It is no mean literary feat to sustain a narrator/fool (cf Bertie Wooster, Pooter) doing both the stupid—innocent involvement in confusion—and the anthropophobic, and with diesel of resignation making his apologia to girls who believe. Wentworth has, as Wooster has, an ability to be himself and to see things as he hidden, "I went white as sugar", . . . "I cried, rose to the roots of my hair", "I went colouring up." And, as Bertie, he has that useful stance, like the class as he writes somebody the board. "I whipped round . . . flush, but I wasn't quick enough catch him . . ."

Wentworth's Burgrove was founded in 1907, though the school has stretched it a bit with its "three ages".

Burgrove! Burgrove! Through ages

Boy and master sing your praises
Turn, you, turn the crowded page
No'er forget those happy days!

When Wentworth is gone, there will probably always be a master at Burgrove who had fallen into the boot-basket. But, he is not flat-footed yet, we may hope. In the last story there is a person-able widow—Mrs Fitch, who seems to be creeping on him the thinks of her as Mrs Fitch. Infatuated in love get into bed, didn't she? Go to it, Mr Wentworth!

The likeness of the amateur

By Jenny Uglow

ROY PARK (Editor):
Lamb as Critic
267pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £9.75.
0 7100 0376 5

In his latest anthology in the Routledge Critics Series, Roy Parks sets out boldly to reinstate Lamb "to a position in the mainstream of English criticism", claiming that the current denial of his status as one of our greatest critics, although understandable, is unjustified". These are solemn words, and an immediate difficulty is that Charles Lamb, like his creation Elia, had a general aversion from being treated like a grave or respectable character". Conscious of his amateur status in the literary world he has always tended to appeal to other amateurs, often for what purists would regard as the wrong reasons—his tragic personal circumstances, idiosyncratic taste, flamboyant prose, deflating irony. Yet it is the vehement egotism of his writing which gives his judgments reality: it enables him to fulfil one prime function of criticism, that of inspiring the readers both to return to familiar authors, plays or works of art and to seek out new territory.

Many of Lamb's better-known pieces combine an enthusiasm for the emotional range of an artist—whether it be Webster's "dialect of despair" or Hogarth's "strong meat for man"—with a sensuous appreciation of style (Marlowe's "luscious smoothness", for example). Beyond this he shows a sensitivity to the nexus of creator/medium/audience which is unique in his period. It is especially noticeable in the essays on drama. The joint experience of audience and actor (whose force is not denied but simply found inadequate to the power and complexity of Shakespearian tragedy) is potently evoked in this description of Munden's enactment of "wonder":

> A tub of butter, contemplated by him, amounts to a Plutonic idea. He understands a leg of mutton in its quiddity. He stands wondering, amid the common-place materials of life, like primeval man with the sun and stars about him.

The indulgent humour of this passage can be relished for its own sake, as it undoubtedly was by its original readers. Lamb was well aware of the potential of his own comic gifts and of its entertainment value. No one can deny the effect of Lamb's insertion, into a controversial but reflective essay, of a short paragraph beginning "It may seem a paradox, but I cannot help thinking" which has always tended to appeal to other amateurs, often for what purists would regard as the wrong reasons—his tragic personal circumstances, idiosyncratic taste, flamboyant prose, deflating irony. Yet it is the vehement egotism of his writing which gives his judgments reality: it enables him to fulfil one prime function of criticism, that of inspiring the readers both to return to familiar authors, plays or works of art and to seek out new territory.

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A further reason why Lamb tends to elude attempts to award him the status of a major critic is the scattered nature of his insights outside a few central essays and reviews. Many of his most illuminating comments—on Defoe's "matter-of-fact narrative", for example, or on Blake's genius—are to be found in his letters, which illustrate the breadth of his reading and the soundness of his critical judgment. The correspondence also suggests a different value in Lamb's criticism, placing him as a member of a circle, showing his response to and influence on the taste, reading and work of his contemporaries. Roy Park's inclusion of extracts from letters in, or about, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Landor, Clare, Keats and others does give some sense of this dynamic, enabling kind of criticism. Park also conveys an idea of the passionate climate of literary life of the century. This is treated with wry irony, as in the description of the "four-twenty pages" rushed to the post by Wordsworth in reply to Lamb's insufficiently fervent reception of the second part of the *Lyrical Ballads*.

The letters are marshalled by Roy Park as evidence to clear Lamb of the charge of exclusiveness of taste. In the introduction, Park is concerned to combat a still more damaging accusation. This is the view that Lamb's criticism is casual and reactive, rather than representative of a consistent, deeply reasoned, aesthetic or moral theory. A note of defensiveness creeps into the efforts to dignify Lamb with a sound theoretical framework, hardly surprising in view of Lamb's almost petulant denial of the value of "system" and his identification with those of "imperfect Sympathies" whose "intellectual wardrobe [to confess fairly] has few whole pieces in it".

Park's argument is appropriately paradoxical—Lamb's underlying system is embodied in his very refusal to theorize. His rejection of abstract reasoning is related to a revulsion from daily "abstraction", the dullness and lethargy of adulthood as compared to the spontaneous receptivity of the child. He is shown to resemble his fellow Romantics in conceiving the imagination as a unifying, revitalizing force which gives man a new poetic (or affective) relationship with reality and which redeems him from the guilt of experience. This interpretation alerts us to imagery of the Fall in Lamb's works and would lead us to regard the Munden passage in a different light. The actor becomes a paradigm of the artist: "Who like him can throw, or even attempt to throw, a preternatural interest over the commonest daily-life objects?" As such the actor or artist can return us to the innocence of "primeval man".

This complete integration of matter with expression is the height of imaginative achievement. Park suggests that Lamb's most significant essays themselves embody, rather than proclaim, this principle of "dramatic morality". He points to the use of oppositions; Penny and Banbury to Hogarth, Lillo's George Barnwell to Othello, Congreve and Wycherley to contemporary sentimental tragedy. Through such contrasts, he suggests, the reader perceives the rift between superficial morality and profound truth, between the complexity of left experience and the limited appropriation of science.

When one turns to the selection itself this reading of Lamb although helpful at times, seems too grandiose, too insistent on coherence of principles. The organization of the anthology, with its stress on the consistency of taste and judgment in Lamb, imposes a rather less structure on this most unstructured of critics. Equal sections are allotted to drama and poetry, less for prose and painting. Within each section, general views are followed by specific criticism in chronological order of subject—Sidney to Keats, More to Hazlitt (this last, a generous review of the first volume of *Table Talk*, 1821, is published for the first time).

Despite this iron discipline, the combination of essays, reviews, letters and reported comment makes for interesting and lively reading. The notes introducing each extract are full of bibliographical and biographical information, and the volume would certainly provide a very thorough and useful student text. Two disappointments are the very abrupt and scanty bibliography and the decision to omit Lamb's own quotations when they are over four or five lines in length. This may be necessary with really lurish quotation, as in the review of The Excursion, but it is infuriating to find short quotations omitted when, as in the case of Clarmon, the opposite page is three-quarters empty.

A good anthology is tantalizing rather than satisfying, and although this volume may whet the appetite for a critical reappraisal of Lamb, it does direct the reader back to the whole body of his work and correspondence. Despite the case for impersonal scholarly analysis made in the introduction, one's final impression is of a collection compiled with the personal affection which this author often seems to inspire in his editors. For instance, a substantial section is devoted to Lamb's comments on a contemporary, Charles Lamb—an entirely appropriate gesture towards a critic whose real motive, like Pater discerned, was "to give you himself, to acquaint you with his likeness".

A recent addition to the series of Oxford English Texts is *The Works of William Collins*, edited by Richard Wendorf and Charles Ryskamp (Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. 235pp. £15. 0 19 812749 9). This provides an old-spelling text together with variant readings, and a full commentary. The two known letters of Collins which survive are included, as is a Latin oration delivered at Winchester College. Appendices deal with such matters as lost works, abortive projects (of which there were several), and doubtful attributions. There are no significant additions to the canon, although one item discarded by Lonsdale and other modern editors has been brought back from the dubia. However, the much-debated *Ode to the Prince of Orange* is left in the doubtful category.

Swallowing the moral pill

By Robin Robbins

JOHN L. LIEVSAY:
The Seventeenth-Century Resolve
211pp. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky. $15.50.
0 8131 1393 8

On New Year's Day our pious, prudent forefathers commemorated the Circumcision, honoured Sulius Fulgentius, Odilo, Almachus, Eugendus, Faine, and both Mochoos, and bribed their earthly masters, landlord, judge, and King: less hopeful or more thrifty with respect to celestial and temporal powers, we tempt Fate with resolutions—perhaps relieved, like Walter Shandy with his little family concernments, to get them all out of the way at one time, and be no more plagued and pestered with them the rest of the year. Yet there was a time when even the making of resolves was not an occasional ritual but a continuous industry: introducing his anthology, *The Seventeenth-Century Resolve*, John L. Lievsay names some twenty exploiters of a form best known from the work of Owen Feltham but devised nearly two decades earlier by Joseph Hall, varied by Nicholas Breton and Richard Brathwait, and exhausted by later worthies such as John Saltmarsh, Caleb Trenchfield, and Henry Tubbe.

The variety of titles under which resolves were published—*Meditations*, and *Vows, Purposes and Resolutions, Essays, Observations, Discoveries, Varieties, Recreations, Occasionals*—hints at the form's loosecuity. The rudimentary structure of meditation upon a text, observation, or anecdote, resolved in vow, exhortation, or prayer, not only appeared alongside essays and sermons, but could incorporate attributes of those genres, and even of the epigram, satire, and character. Such omnivorocity can relieve the tedium of this simplest of forms; whose moral pills are otherwise sugared merely with endless "witty conceits"; it also betrays its invulnerability compared with the similarly inclusive but more flexible essay.

Professor Lievsay cannot be accused of over-selling his wares: the characterizes Tuvil's pieces as "little more than a skilful tessellation of passages from the Bible", Tubbe's as "frequently derivative and of no exceeding brilliance"; Stafford is "a little overmuch given to playing with alliteration, antitheses, repetitions, paralox, and other word-juggling", Strother "a murky thinker and a murky writer, . . . included here rather for the quaintness of his Scotish burr than for any moro positive merit". Hoptopreates the "preacherly tediousness of Tuke", Warwick's "obsession with the idiocies of paralnx", and "Henshaw's meagre store of wit. . . . One can sympathize with Popys, when found Henshaw's preaching dull". Added to the dead weight of didactieism and the overstraining of wit, the wavering of the form lee a hernial effect on both writer and reader. As Lievsay observes, Tuke "is right in being puzzled for a proper label"; Brathwait's resolves appear along with essays and characters; and we may take the fourth Barron North at his ingenuous word when he confesses that "they are no other than a more after-birth to some of my serious thoughts, which I have thought fit to preserve in being, rather for the satisfaction of myself than of others".

The greater number of the resolves here collected offer only intervo here collected offer only intermittent pleasures. Hall is most memorable when most brief; Tovill's openings can be worthy of Bacon or Herbert—"God is not an Italianated courtier" "Prayst to the minde's ambassador to God." The commonplace rendered by Rous as "adversitie hath whipt many to heaven, when prosperity hath coached more to hell" is evocatively varied by Henshaw: "The prison and the hatchet, sores and cromo lead to Abraham's bosome, and the way thither is by weeping-cross." Spencer exhumes a timelessly applicable anecdote from Plutarch: "A preting barber asked King Archelaus how he would be trimmed. The King replyed, *Silently*." To Trenchfield we owe the story of the dogs of Agneno, who, used by the locale to demonstrate in quick succesion the lethal fumes in lie cave and the reviving properties of its lake, at the sight of tourists would take to the hills.

Feltham alone serves up resolvee that are not mere curate's eggs, because, as the editor reports yet we may hope, in the less years there is a person-able widow—Mrs Fitch, who seems to be creeping on him the thinks of her as Mrs Fitch. Infatuated in love get into bed, didn't she? Go to it, Mr Wentworth!

how to salt the work with extractable wit, as on tedious sermons full of distended sentences: "I love not those cart-ropes speeches that are longer than the memorie of men can fathome"; or in the characteristically Royollot pronouncement, "Fectione hends must be higher by a hend than their bodies." But he is the only writer in this collection who can both snatch our attention with an opening such as "Nothing hath spoyl'd truth more then the invention of logicke", and keep our interest throughout his connected hot various demonstration till he reaches an equally well-wrought close: "It may hoipe me to strip off doubts, but I would not have it helpe in moke them."

Had Feltham not existed, the nebulous status of the resolve in the literary universe would hardly have made it necessary to invent him: after momentary sightings in learned journals, other exemplers could only have gravitated into the black hole of oblivion. Gis properly equipped for their situation are technically termed "In MOP"—Mission-Oriented Posture: though Professor Lievsay has deftly played the carpenter in cutting and joining these knotty timbers, the walrus might well ask if those twenty men with seven MOPs—sermon, essay, character, meditation, satire, epigram, and conceit—though they swept for sixty years, ever clearly saw the beach for the pebbles.

These minimally modernized texts, with usually full notes, will serve honourably to keep in view a mildly interesting if not very attractive genre. More thorough noting of Biblical echoes would forestall attribution to these preachers of beauties they were incapable of: though some of us remember singing "The heavens declare . . ." fewer will recall the context of attacks on child welfare and other community services at the beginning of Exodus in which "While the mid-wives of Egypt feared God, they had houses built for them." There are occasional lors in this edition, such as the phrase "unco' guid" to a supplied title; while the intemperate implication that those who consider Bacon to be the father of the English essay are all besotted with the holty-toity obsessions of belletristic critics" begs a question or two. None the less, it is cheering that such a respectably unpopular but valuable work as this can be published, and, furthermore, in such a pleasing form.

The conjugality of composition

By Martin Cooper

MOSCO CARNER:
Major and Minor
257pp. Duckworth. £24.
0 7156 0948 3

The reputation that Mosco Carner has achieved by his full-length studies of Puccini and Berg has naturally thrown into the shade his achievements in other fields of musicology; and this present collection of essays, *Major and Minor*, is an excellent reminder of the catholicity of his taste and the versatility of his mind. He has wisely reprinted a number of essays which appeared in an earlier collection ("Of Men and Music", 1944), including an admirable comparison of Puccini and Debussy; an interesting piece on Mahler's recording of Schumann's symphonies; and another on Matyas Seiber's *Ulysses*, which should do much to revive interest in a neglected work.

Apart from a valuable analytical guide to Bartók's string quartets, most of the new essays in the present volume are concerned with nineteenth-century German music. His scrupulously fair "Goethe and Music" shows conclusively that Goethe was not what we normally mean by musical—in the poet's own words "he approached music more through reflection, and therefore in a more general way, than through enjoyment" and needed some form of programme in order to grasp purely instrumental music. In fact Dr Carner's thorough and perspicacious introductions to the instrumental music of Schubert and Schumann, printed here, might have given Goethe food for "reflection" though they could not have supplied him with the initial "enjoyment" of the music itself. Real music-lovers, on the other hand, will find their spontaneous enjoyment of the music much enhanced by these reflections, which communicate professional knowledge and understanding in a manner perfectly intelligible to any ordinary music-lover. His comment on the old Pfitzner-Berg controversy contains a good example of the clear-mindedness which enables him to state an aesthetic problem—in this case the assessing of musical quality—in simple terms. "It is in the difference by which the whole musical work is bigger than the sum of its parts that our prime difficulties lie in explaining. In technical terms, why one theme is memorable and another not".

By far the longest and most significant of this collection is the essay on Beethoven's *Fidelio*—its history, the comparison of the three versions and the sources on which the composer drew in planning the musical presentation of Bouilly's original drama. By detailed examination Dr Carner shows the specific qualities of each of Beethoven's librettists—Sonnleithner's dramatically diffuse original version corrected by Stephan von Breuning in the short-lived second version, and Treitschke's almost completely successful re-shaping of the work as we know it today. Each version has its own character and any attempt to conflate the three is mistaken: like the *Leonore* and *Fidelio* overtures, they represent different approaches to a single theme. Whether that theme is in fact conjugal fidelity, as in Bouilly's original, or whether Beethoven used the story as a parable of his own predicament, is questioned by Dr Carner. He inclines to think that Beethoven was attracted in the story of Florestan's heroic, but passive resistance to tyrannical persecution by the parallel he saw to the persecution of deafness—another kind of imprisonment—to which he felt he had been subjected as the innocent victim of "an intrigue of nature", the old, or tragic necessity, of the Greek dramatists. It is true that Florestan, if not an anti-hero, is entirely passive; he can only endure. But who, or what, in that case does Leonore represent? Dr Carner believes that Beethoven unconsciously equated her "with his own resolve to rise above his tragic fate . . . by a complete devotion to conjugalism". This resolve, as perhaps Beethoven really knew, involved renouncing the hope of marriage; and so Leonore would have been to him both the heroic woman whom he imagined, but knew he would never find, and a personification of music itself, which did effectively save his reality and provide him with a reason for living. Such a theory can plainly never be substantiated, but it would certainly do something to explain Beethoven's passionate and lasting concern with a "conjugal fidelity"—something that, in a bachelor, needs explaining.

We are on much firmer ground when Dr Carner traces Beethoven's indebtedness to the other composers who made Bouilly's story the subject of their operas; and although there is no question of any reflection on the infinitely superior quality of *Fidelio* to any of these, Dr Carner gives a surprisingly large number of instances in which the origin of individual musical features, even musical phrases and figures, in *Fidelio* can be traced to other composers of the story. There were three of these—Gossec, Paer and Simon Mayr, whose *L'amor coniugale* is the subject of a separate essay in this volume. Paer, who eventually became Napoleon's official *maître de chapelle*, was probably the most important of the three; and the comparison of the prison-scene in his *Leonora*, given in Dresden a year before the first performance of *Fidelio*, reveals astonishing similarities to Beethoven's. The origins of Rocco's "Gold" aria in Act 1 and of "Nemmeno Prendo" duet are equally clearly traced to Gaveaux. In some instances these borrowings were, as it were, recycled. Thus Beethoven eventually rejected florid vocal passages for Leonore modelled on Paer in the first version of *Fidelio*, by much simpler and more telling music, though the great apostrophe of Florestan ("Abscheulicher! wo eilst du hin?") is still closely modelled on Paer.

I should like to differ with Carner on a matter of historical fact in one instance. He speaks, in his essay on Simon Mayr (page 1[illegible]), of the Neapolitan composers Jommelli and Traetta as being "under the influence of Gluck", whereas I believe that a closer comparison of dates and styles shows that Jommelli in Stuttgart (1753) clearly anticipated Gluck's most imaginative and extended use of the orchestra, while Traetta's years at the French Court of Parma (1765) resulted in Italian-style "reform" operas such as his *Armida* performed in 1781 in Vienna, where Gluck must certainly have heard it. Both these composers chief operas were written before Gluck's *Orfeo* (1762); and he already admirated the reforms associated with Gluck's name, although it was he who crystallized corried these reforms through and produced the musical and dramatic tool justification for the new style.

Tweets from an expensive bird

By Percy M. Young

GEORGE S. EMMERSON:
Arthur Darling
The Romance of Arthur Sullivan and Rachel Scott Russell (from their love letters)
139pp. London, Ontario; Galt House Publications. £7.50.
0 919534 04 X

When Pelham Humfrey returned to England from France, where he had been sent by Charles II to study current musical fashions, he appeared to Pepys as a "absolute Monsieur". Two centuries later Arthur Sullivan came back from four years of instruction in Leipzig, giving such assurances of mastery of German style that he was welcomed by the knowledgeable as the next great English composer. Through the good offices of George Grove, then Secretary of the Crystal Palace, his *Prüfungskonzert* exercise of 1861—incidental music for *The Tempest*—was played to an enraptured Crystal Palace audience on April 5, 1862. Such was its reception that it was repeated a week later. Sullivan, a month short of his twentieth birthday, had arrived. What was more, he had arrived in Sydenham, the then cultural headquarters of southern England.

The Sydenham Group of the 1860s was a fine federation of wealth, talent and beauty. Browning, Wilkie Collins, Dickens, Holman Hunt, Gladstone, Grove, Dannreuther, Joachim and Clara Schumann were but a few of the guests of honour of the families Lehmann, von Glehn, and Scott Russell. When Sullivan came on the scene it happened that some of the daughters of those socially eminent households were candidates for matrimonial consideration. Where he spent much time was with the Scott Russells. John Scott Russell, a Scottish-born engineer, notable for his originality in ship design and advanced views on technical education, had three daughters—Louise, Rachel, and Alice—all of them, according to Grove, conspicuous both for brains and beauty. Scott Russell was a bad manager of his business affairs and on the point of Sullivan's entry into his life was teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. It was imperative that his daughter married well. It was Rachel who was to play Juliet to Phillips's Romeo, Ralph Rackstraw—but without the happy ending.

Sullivan was already not without a reputation. His fellow student in Leipzig, Clara Bateman, later wrote how "the sight of him excited in me a strange emotion never before experienced! Something happened within me, I knew not what! When my turn came to play I had no thought of either Director or Faculty, but only what impression my playing would make on that dark-eyed, curly-headed youth!" Rachel Scott Russell was similarly moved by a strange emotion and fell into Arthur's arms in 1864. Two years his junior, she was totally captivated by his fatal charm and became certain, moreover, that he was a genius. The first flush of eager love was fortified by a sense of duty that flowed from the domestic reality of the age; it was for her to ensure that Arthur should become great. In 1865, in George S. Emmerson's words, "Sullivan and Rachel secretly vowed eternal love one for the other". Considering that they were "engaged", Rachel wrestled with fate—in the form of Arthur's flexible attitudes in love and its duties, and parental displeasure—for the next five years. Since she was to die of tuberculosis in 1882 it may be said that she gave the best of her years to her "darling Arthur". The record of those years is in the letters which are the basis of this book and which are preserved in the Pierpont Morgan Library.

The oral story of Rachel's frustrated passion and dedication to an ideal was told by Dr Emmerson in one chapter of his study of John Scott Russell published in 1977. The expansion of the story tends to turn sympathy into irritation. The manner of the letters supplies the reason for Sullivan's inclination sometimes to seek refuge elsewhere. Passionate when with Rachel, he not infrequently tested the strength of their relationship by application to the affections of other girls. One of them was Rachel's sister Louise, who—according to her letters contained in the book—knew better than Rachel how to manage the wayward Arthur.

It was not easy for him. Rachel made it clear that she would expect after marriage to be maintained in style. Likewise she made it clear that Arthur was not to "desecrate the sacred and beautiful experience of love", but "to associate daily with those that are pure and educated and refined". Since she was, as she said, an "expansive bird" he should build up "a nice balance at the bank" after obtaining suitable employment. As a composer he should aim at what was "large and great", while remaining "good and pure and true and noble". To do him credit, Arthur did his best to satisfy some of those conditions. During his Rachel period he composed the "Irish" symphony, a cello concerto, the overtures "In Memoriam" and "Marmion". Rachel proposed in one letter that the cello concerto should be rewritten, on being in its first state "incomplete and vague".

The Symphony in D advertised in a Crystal Palace programme in 1868 was in response to Rachel's importuning; it is symbolic of their personal relationship that it was never consummated. From this point Sullivan was pointing over *Cox and Box* and *The Contrabandista* towards a new world of fun and fancy, and away from the "large and great". He was determined to be his own man.

With its sad little episodes of deceit—secret meetings in the park, in Grove's office—and its infidelities and threats (on Rachel's side of "betrothal to another"), the record of this romance, whether in Rachel's prose or Dr Emmerson's commentary, has the quality of one of Mrs Croik's novelettes. There are, however, some terrible truths in the story, not least concerning the life of the Victorian girl. Dr Emmerson is not at home in this environment, and his appreciation of the professional side is so uncertain that he has Sullivan a student at the Royal College of Music twenty or so years before that institution was founded. Confidence is hard to support when errors in the text include Halle for Hallé, Joachim for Joachim, Phillip for Phillips, as well as Rosetti, Dvorack, Sternsdale Bennet, Weisbaden, and (Winston) Church-hill, while for von Bülow, Sophie Löwe, and Zürlott there is not an Umlaut in sight.

A language is a house

A language is a house of words and sounds
With many secret vaults under its gables,
And with a wall around. Few cumulus grounds
Are left, for those who dream to build new Babels.
An English phrase may have its counterpart
In French or in Romanian, but its texture
Remains unique and continents apart
From any other verbal architecture.

Behind the English words one often feels
The presence of a giant: Shakespeare, Dickens
And many others are about your heels
When walking on, amid their fog which thickens.

How, then, if you are prompted to express
Yourself, and give your soul another version,
Could you the language-barrier transgress?
There is a single method: by immersion.

Petre Solomon

The cycloid style

By Eric Sams

I. A. COPLEY:
The Music of Peter Warlock A Critical Study
334pp. Dobson. £9.95.
0 234 77249 2

Born Philip Heseltine in 1894, buried under the name Peter Warlock in 1930, having first turned out the familiar rut and then turned on the releasing gas, thus effecting his own escape. What kind of man and song-writer was he, of what artistic stature, caught in what tragic predicament? There is no dearth of commentary, both factual and fictional. The fullest portrait, in spite of its many disputed and perhaps distorted features, remains that of Cecil Gray (1934). There is also the testimony of both D. H. Lawrence and Aldous Huxley who each saw the young composer through their own characters, Halliday in *Women in Love* (1921) and Coleman in *Antic Hay* (1923). Seldom was any personality more split than between these two contradictory depictions, one pollent and familiar, the other rock-hard and virile. But they were both readily recognizable, and they may provide pointers to the still unexplained change of name.

The name Heseltine is said to derive from "hazel"; hence perhaps a quick switch to "witch" and thence by a corrective sex-change to "warlock". As a potent occult force, full of strong enchantments, music could amend its shape and pulse to match any real or imagined contrasts of mood or gender; Warlock's rhythms for example range from a tranced hovering to a brutal stamping. Such contrasts also characterize the great Lied-composers; the cycloid temperament has evident affinities with the song form. Warlock's world was even more closed; not to say hermetically sealed, by his highly insular choice of lyrics; most of the poems he set were either delved from obscure archives or confided by private friends. His music is often as enigmatic as his mind.

I. A. Copley's *The Music of Peter Warlock* is neither disposed to offer disclosures nor designed to explore mysteries, whether psychic or creative. It is addressed to specialist musicians rather than general music-lovers. Of its 300 pages, thirty describe the life and 200 the music (divided into song, vocal chamber, choral and instrumental), with an introduction on style and a final conspectus. The rest is factual, comprising detailed data on the published works and manuscripts, a useful account of the prose writings, editorship and researches, and a comprehensive bibliography. Interspersed in the text are the evaluative comments which justify the subtitle. I feel that component full and well ordered, the musical descriptions always perceptive and generally persuasive, and the whole emotionally well-documented, with 82 music examples.

The biography and evaluation however, seem less compelling. The recurring keynote is academic enthusiasm, a modest fanfare on muted trumpet—there could have been more brass, more pull. The book has not been notably edited or presented. There are flabby phrases, odd epithets which call for further qualification (e.g. the "festering" heart of the Yeats "Curlew" poems?). Some of the biography is just varying shades of Cecil Gray; too much of the critical analysis of fusion patches quotes from earlier commentators; some material is too thin and peripheral to be really serviceable, even a tantalizing pairing ("Arthur Warrell and Cockshut) that Aldous Huxley had suggested music by Villa-Lobos is unlikely for the University of Bristol choir").

The surest sign that the book has grown out of hand not always accordant with a PhD thesis is the lack devoted to the question of influence. This is treated rather as a form of influenza. In his youth, Warlock succumbed to a Delius epidemic, which may have sapped his resistance to a near-fatal attack of the van Dieren syndrome. He was also constantly introducing folk-song and early music, with a touch of modern music-hall, while suffering intermittent acute bouts of Bartók, Goldmark and very many others. The contagion could sometimes be acquired at second-hand, as when an Irelandish influence was conveyed through the carrier Moeran. But the final diagnosis, as in all such cases, is that Warlock remains essentially unaffected. No one else could have written his music, though it so often sounds as if someone else had. He remains wholly individual (page 46), yet he has no stylistic unity (page 260).

The aesthetics, not to mention the logic, of such a thesis are bound to arouse doubts; perhaps Dr Copley shares them. His perception speaks only of "one of the most gifted of song-writers". For such a figure, this book would be a worthy memorial. But those who, like Constant Lambert, rate Warlock as "one of the greatest song-writers" will want a more broadly based and vigorous vindication of his genius. Meanwhile we also await a collected edition of the music in print and on disc, together with a selection of the prose and a definitive biography; the 1930s should see the final emergence of Warlock from the private circle into the public domain. It is fair to add that this transition, whenever and however it comes about, will surely prove to have been greatly facilitated by the dedicated service of Dr Copley.